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WE HAVE SEEN EVIL

by the same author

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MINOS THE INCORRUPTIBLE

PILSUDSKI

PADEREWSKI

GOD IS MY ADVENTURE

SEVEN

THY KINGDOM COME

SEARCH FOR TOMORROW

ARM THE APOSTLES

LOVE FOR A COUNTRY

OF NO IMPORTANCE

WE HAVE SEEN EVIL

A Background to War

by

ROM LANDAU

'Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.'—*Psalm xx.*

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In Memoriam

RONALD CARTLAND

born 3rd January 1907,

killed on Cassel Hill, 20th May 1940

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INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION

On the following morning your mother received the final news of your death.

It was only a few hours previously, 2 a.m. to be exact, that you came to visit me—such a long journey from the torn fields and bleeding hills of France to the village in Sussex, yet so near your new abode beyond space or time. Your presence was more intimate and almost more tangible than I had ever known it in the fourteen years of our friendship. You complained of cold. And instead of the usual look of eagerness on your handsome face, there was a new peace, or was it perhaps sadness? For all its tender calm your presence was so vivid, so intense, that, having first entered into my dreams, it remained with me throughout the wakeful hours until dawn. So when finally I got up, I couldn't help writing to your sister to tell her of your visit. Three days later she rang me up to tell me of the letter which your mother had received.

INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION

Even if you had not called from behind the hidden ridge, I should have chosen no-one's name but yours to grace these imperfect pages. It was you who for so long urged me to write this book. Christianity, Britain, democracy—these were the things that formed the pivot of your valiant life. And because you treasured them so much, the German menace was not a mere abstraction to you, but something ever-present and unspeakably terrible. At a time when no young Tory could gather laurels by warning his fellow countrymen against that threat you never ceased to raise your voice about it, and tried to shake them out of their appeasing dreams.

When the war broke out I was anxious to fulfil your wish and to write about what in thirty years' contacts with Wilhelminian, Republican, and Nazi Germany I had seen and learnt of the spirit that shaped the German people. More pressing work, however, suddenly claimed me.

To-day, when the book appears, your own strivings are sealed by a hero's death. Yet the book may possibly be more opportune than it would have been in 1939. The nearer the day of final reckoning the more it becomes a duty for those of us who both *know* Germany and have the Christian tenets of our civilization at heart to clarify our thoughts as to the true meaning of the present struggle and to speak of the more beautiful England that may possibly lie beyond it.

The German bullet that struck you on top of the hill

INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION

above Cassel had no power to prevent you from urging me to carry on some of the work which you yourself have laid aside. But then, Ronald, we have always known that there are certain ties and certain tasks that no bullet can destroy.

R.

20th May 1941

Part One

THE PROTAGONISTS

Chapter 1

THE MAN IN BERLIN



I

Had not the subdued flutter among the other guests suggested his exalted position, I should hardly have noticed him. He wore the brown shirt, breeches, and ill-fitting boots common to most of the men in the room, and there was no mark of distinction in his bearing. But the smiles and the flattering glances of those present were directed towards him, and I should have guessed his identity even without remembering the mop of black hair and the absurd little moustache I had seen in several photographs.

Germany had not yet opened to the world all the windows into the abyss of her self-tortured soul, and the man with the little moustache was still on the upward path of his dazzling career. Though many millions of Germans had already sworn their allegiance to him, and though the Sportpalast, Berlin's largest hall, accom-

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modating over ten thousand people—where in a short while he would speak—was packed, he was as yet no more than the leader of one of many political parties. In the Reichstag he had an impressive following, but in the Cabinet his party held not one single seat. The country's highest authority still rested in the martial hands of the *alter Herr*.

2

I had come to Berlin on a short visit from England; and as the image of the man with the little moustache did not yet crown national and religious shrines, and his lieutenants still accorded him a semblance of non-divine normality, the right kind of connections enabled me to be present in the room in which most of the leading 'brown' lights were assembled.

Their fame was yet to come, and the guests who stood out were a few eminent industrialists and a famous representative of the *ancien régime*. But the faces of one or two of the new men were no longer unfamiliar to me, and I immediately noticed the rotund jocosity of Göring, and his continuous cracking of jokes. His eyes, his mouth, even his belly acted his self-assigned part with deliberation, but also with gusto. He was the cheery party uncle whom 'you couldn't help liking', and the dashing Prussian officer who, alone in this assembly, felt on equal terms with the great industrialists and aristocrats. He alone knew 'how to kiss ladies'

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hands and make them feel daring, almost oblivious of the true purpose of the occasion.

I also remember Göbbels, tiny, officious, but nervous, rushing hither and thither with a pile of papers under his arm, his large head jerking on a long thin neck, his rugged features tense. Even in his loud laughter there was an undertone of uneasiness. He was not wearing uniform, but an extremely new-looking, light-grey suit with padded shoulders and a loose back, to give his mouse-like figure greater fullness.

While it might have needed some experience to divine a ruthless animal brutality behind Göring's *bonhomie*, you recognized at a glance the fanaticism inscribed on Göbbels' face. It was that of a man who sought adventure in books rather than in life, and who aspired in vain to be a 'man of action'. It might have been the frustrated ambition of the club-footed gnome that had made his face shrivel prematurely, transforming it into a tight, wrinkled mask. When he laughed, however, he looked incredibly young, almost like a schoolboy. Yet even then his face neither mellowed nor relaxed. Those minor officials of the Spanish Inquisition who supplied their superiors with anonymous denunciations and who never forgot an insult or an unkind word, must have looked like him. I cannot help imagining that the blood of such people often turns sour. Observing them, you feel your mouth involun-

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tarily contracting, as though you were watching a man sucking a lemon.

Of the other men and women present I have no clear recollection. I know that Frau Göbbels was there, most of the time in the very centre of the small assembly, and Röhm, talking animatedly to a few young Brownshirts. And I remember that every door leading from the room was flanked by two immobile, husky fellows, clad in black, with red swastika armlets on their sleeves and daggers in their belts.

3

The man with the black moustache was the least conspicuous and the quietest in the room. He spoke little, but when he addressed one of the ladies his upper half performed a sort of bowing motion. I noticed how flabby his face was. And his complexion had that creamy greyness that is the result of an indoor life, or of a starchy diet. The lips had a fine, sensitive outline, but seemed too pointed and too thin for a man's face; they might have been those of a middle-aged spinster. During a conversation the mouth became engaging, even attractive. And so did the dark eyes. There was a striking co-ordination between them and the mouth. When the lips rested, the eyes were immobile, fixed on some object, yet apparently withdrawn. When the lips moved, the eyes moved with them. They could laugh and convey warmth, and at such moments there was not a trace in them of the tension and suspicion which

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never departed from Göbbels' eyes. A 'charmer', it flashed through my mind.

The delighted and adoring smiles of the few females around him were evidently quite genuine. I remember that at the time the picture of those ladies suggested to me the rehearsal of a provincial ballet: the dancers in ordinary day clothes performing with more abandon than grace, their cheeks devoid of all make-up and shiny with perspiration. I can still see them raising their flushed faces towards Lohengrin, and the coy swaying of their large bodies.

I wasn't sufficiently near to overhear the conversation, but could clearly distinguish the hero's intonation. It had the unmistakable Austrian tang, melodious and pleasing, and was impregnated with a sort of romantic ardour. With the exception of Göring, no-one seemed at ease. Even Lohengrin looked self-conscious and gauche—in fact, rather the pleasant young man from the shop next door, whom in a rash moment you had asked to tea, and whom you now pitied even more than you had done when facing him behind his counter.

4

On his short walk to the main hall youths with banners formed a guard of honour. When he reached the immense place frantic clapping and shouting broke out. The moment he had mounted the speaker's stand the uproar ceased with disciplined abruptness.

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He eyed the crowd for a moment, and then began to speak. The first few sentences sounded hesitant, as though he were trying to find himself. But this did not last very long.

Immediately afterwards I witnessed a most unusual spectacle. At the time it merely surprised me. Later on, when I thought about it, it made me feel uncomfortable even in retrospect. For never in my life had I seen a more drastic change come over any man.

What previously had appeared gauche and gentle, with a touch of effeminacy, gave place to harshness, to stiff military jerks of head and arms. The whole body stiffened and became soldierly. But more remarkable still was the change of his expression. I could almost see the soft and unhealthy looking cheeks tightening, every muscle in the face, previously invisible under the little pouches of fat and the pallid skin, becoming accentuated. The womanish mouth, which had smiled so gently, was tense; in fact everything about him had acquired a martial tautness.

Nothing, however, was more completely transformed than his eyes. These were no longer the abstracted eyes of the melancholy charmer dreaming of Wagner and Schumann, of grandiose architecture, of poetry and painting. No longer would the limpid pupils be raised in timid *Schwärmerei*; nor their helplessness make elderly women feel they would like to be sisters to him, and young girls to mother him. The timidity of

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Adolf Schicklgruber¹ had departed from those eyes. They seemed to have become bigger, especially the white around the pupil. This enlarged white background gave them a staring, hypnotic, and also demented expression. There was an iciness in them that could come from fanatical hatred only. They hardly seemed the eyes of a human being.

This transformation gave me a sort of shudder—as if I were watching a man who had ceased to be himself and was possessed by some alien spirit. This was no longer the inconspicuous-looking Adolf Schicklgruber devoted to music and whipped cream and unable to hurt a fly. The voice itself was different. Only a short while ago it had had a mellow cadence expressing that inborn sense of music characteristic of his native Austria. But now the ear could not detect in his tones the faintest echo of the 'Blue Danube'. The river was dark and turgid, and its waves were overflowing the banks in uncontrollable torrents. This was neither Schumann nor Strauss. The composer of those notes was driven by a darkening frenzy, and the key in which his demoniac *Preislied* was pitched had nothing in it of the undulating mountains of the Salzkammergut, nothing but the icy sweep of Prussian plains in winter. It was Prussian at its most uncompro-

¹ Hitler's father, who was an illegitimate child, adopted his mother's name Schicklgruber, and till the age of over forty called himself Alois Schicklgruber.

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missing. I am convinced that if Adolf Schicklgruber had tried to use these intonations in the course of a friendly conversation he could not have reproduced them. They did not seem part of the man on the platform, but flowed into him from outside, from some world beyond and beneath him. And from that world must have come his sudden appearance of manliness—no, not of manliness, but of the tautness of a bow ready to release its arrow.

To anyone accustomed to Western oratory, even if not at its very best, the words that gushed from the speaker's mouth seemed crude in their distortion of facts. But interrupted, as they often were, by shrieks due to an excess of emotion, and accompanied by violent gestures—the index finger would shoot out like a spring-loaded weapon—those phrases took on meaning. And that meaning, threatening yet equivocal, seemed to find its response not in the listener's brain but in some other organ, possibly the solar plexus.

I must have been the only one who felt thus. Ten thousand people around me sat spellbound. Not for a second did their eyes leave the epileptic dance before them. Every cue the speaker threw out to them was taken up by a frantic chorus. 'Sieg Heill! Sieg Heill! Sieg Heill!' ('Hail Victory'), echoed his promises of the Golden Age; 'Nieder, nieder, nieder' ('Down') his references to the Government, thanks to whose indulgence he was allowed to hold the meeting, and 'Schande,

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Schande, Schande' ('Shame') his every mention of the Jews or of Moscow. They were like mesmerized mice. Yet before the beginning of the speech I had noticed how many in the audience were handsome, with the fresh and eager faces of healthy youth. Many of them had the fair hair and blue eyes of the travel posters, and the trained bodies which a few years later were to arouse such elated feelings in the breasts of so many titled visitors from across the Channel to the *Parteitag* at Nürnberg.

Now there was neither beauty, youth, nor simplicity in them. Could any human agency have transformed them into those electrified robots? Some sinister force had taken hold of them, bearing them forward towards a goal, compelling and magnetic, yet lost completely in a veiled unknown. Humanity had fled from the vast hall with its steel girders and walls of concrete, as if it could no longer breathe in this upflung rush of darker powers.

Yet this was not a madhouse: the inmates of a madhouse at least are human beings. This scene was beyond human valuation. If it was anything conveyable in human language at all, it was some darkening twilight of the gods. But the gods had departed, and the nether-worlds had taken possession of the hall.

With an increasing feeling of discomfort I suffered the scene for well over an hour. From the speaker's face and lock of hair sweat was dripping. Yet no pause was

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allowed to break the spell or open the doors to a kinder breeze. It was like witnessing some illicit adventure.

The sight of a man caught in the grip of an excess of feeling is always embarrassing; that of ten thousand men caught by such passion becomes unbearable. Suddenly I realized that passion was akin to nothing so much as to crime. It could not thrive on order and balance, but would welcome every blow dealt to decency, belief, and self-respect. For only from such victory could it cull its own delights. The alleys of passion, unlike those of crime, need not necessarily be unclean. Yet in this hall the two were identical. This was not passion of manly conquest, but of unmanly abandon to an unknown Nemesis, the more terrifying for her intangible yoke. Whereas the speaker's voice spoke of pride and victory and masculine virtue, the faces of the ten thousand listeners spoke of the unhallowed glory of prostration and self-abasement. Their personalities ceased to matter or to be real. One man alone was real. And it was he who incorporated, in so convincing and fateful a way, all that was taking place, visibly and invisibly, in the hall.

When I became conscious of this I think I must have blushed. For I remember clearly feeling the peculiar humiliating sensation that besets us when we feel shame for someone else. And strongly resenting this humiliation, I summoned up my courage and left my seat. I somehow managed to do it inconspicuously, and

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when I reached the brown-shirted guard by the exit, I asked him in a whisper where the lavatory was. Thus I was able to leave the place with a 'clear' conscience, having laid the blame for my sacrilegious conduct at the doors of *force majeure*.

Chapter 2

THE MAN IN PALERMO



I

The sun was falling with a blinding glare upon the square in front of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo. Though it was only spring, the rows of palms were looking dusty and the shade they afforded was sparse. But the flowers in the borders were aglow with their vivid reds and blues.

The square was thronged with people. Only a few among them were women. It was a sombre-looking crowd, for most of the men wore black suits, hats, and ties. They were in high spirits, but not unduly so. They had come to be present at an utterly new spectacle, but they were more than sceptical of the new performer. Meanwhile, however, they were gossiping and exchanging salutes.

‘Come sta, Cavaliere?’ ‘Grazie, non c’è male. E lei?’ ‘Abbastanza, abbastanza. Che bella giornata. Si direbbe che siamo in luglio, invece non c’è che maggio.’

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'Èverro. Man no dico che mi piace. Fa troppo caldo. Mi sento proprio bagnato.' 'Anch'io, Cavaliere, anch'io.'¹

And then someone raised his voice, 'Eccolo, arriva.' Groups of men in black shirts raised the shout, 'Il Duce, il Duce', but the cry was not taken up by the crowd. And someone behind me hissed between his teeth, 'Traditore!'

2

The Duce was a novelty in Sicily. It was the last province in Italy yet to fall under his spell. With their highly developed individualism, their suspicious natures, their preference for taking the law into their own hands, and their detestation of the new creed that came from the distant north—almost as far removed from the sunbaked shores of Sicily as Germania and Inghilterra—they distrusted the new leader. And were determined to oppose him.

Anyhow, like most governments, his was bound to fall soon, and, if not, let him first learn that *la bella Sicilia* was not industrial Piedmont or Lombardy, nor effeminate, self-adoring Tuscany, nor even grandiloquent Rome. What was Rome, anyhow? If it were not for the presence of the Pope, it would be housing no-

¹ 'How are you, Cavaliere?' 'Thanks, not at all badly. And yourself?' 'Fairly well. What a lovely day. You would say this is July, and yet it's only May.' 'It's true. But I don't care for it. It's too hot. I'm simply soaking.' 'So am I, Cavaliere.'

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one but profiteers and a government that no real Sicilian was likely to trust; and officials who thought of nothing but promotion and bribes.

Mussolini was fully cognisant of the feelings that awaited him in Sicily. He hadn't dared to visit the southern isle until he felt well established in the rest of Italy. Nevertheless, and though himself a son of the north, he realized that in his scheme of things there would always be an Achilles' heel if Sicily were not won over by him personally. So his visit to Palermo was in the nature of an important campaign. Much depended upon its outcome, and both he and the Sicilians knew it. This gave the occasion its specific tang.

3

I witnessed the meeting by accident rather than by design. I was on my way home from Africa and was spending a few leisurely days in the shadow of Monte Pellegrino. In my mood of the moment, politics, and especially Italian politics, interested me but little. Did it much matter whether the name of the Prime Minister of this enchanting country was Sonnino or Giolitti, Nitti or Mussolini? They were all beautiful-sounding names, and you felt almost tempted to write an ode to each one of them. What a wealth of lovely, clear vowels Son-ni-no. It would be almost like singing about the sun, not our plain English sun, but a far more complex

THE MAN IN PALERMO

one. First the open glare of the 'Son'; and then the caressing 'ni'; and then, with theatrical effect and denying all former assertions, the final 'no'. Or Giolitti! How soft and warm it sounded, suggesting *gioja* and *gioielli* and *gioventu*, all subjects worthy of poetry. The sound of the new name wasn't quite so good, but after its pedestrian beginning the soft ending, 'lini', could still inspire a full-throated stanza.

Anyhow, my hotel was only a minute's walk from the Massimo, and I was spending the lazy after-lunch hour in one of the open-air cafés flanking the theatre. Having just indulged in a voluminous *cassatta siciliana*, all white and pink and green, with pistachios and almonds and caramel inside, and whipped cream on top, I felt it would make an invigorating change to listen to the new man.

4

At last he arrived. I couldn't see whether he had come on foot or by car; the crowd that separated us was too big. But I was near the speaker's rostrum, and could admire its artful draperies in the national colours. The sign of the party, two small Lictors' *fasci*, were attached inconspicuously to two lower corners.

Whereas Mussolini himself wore the simple black shirt of his party, his retinue, a flock of birds of paradise, glittered in multi-coloured orders and ribbons and tassels.

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The men at the back of the platform were still chattering and pushing to be near the front. Mussolini alone was standing motionless, his hands resting on the parapet below him. His expression was extremely serious, with a frown darkening the vast dome of his forehead. He kept his eyes fixed upon the crowd, and remained in this attitude for well over a minute. But at the end of that time the silence, and also the heat, became almost tangible.

Then he flung up his right arm.

'Figli di Giulio Cesare!' a strong manly voice shot out into the crowd. Then a pause.

'Figli di Dantel' Then another pause.

And then, the voice rising and the words gathering speed, 'Figli di Michelangelo, di Leonardo!' He then paused again.

Yet the words with the sublime invocation seemed to be hanging over the piazza like a glowing canopy.

A few men near me exchanged glances. They were appreciative glances. The men may have been shop assistants or railway officials or lawyers, or ice-cream vendors, or perhaps barbers; yet he had called them the sons of Julius Caesar and Dante and Michelangelo. *Per bacco*, he appreciates us, after all. Of course we are the sons of Dante (born in Ravenna) and Michelangelo (born in Caprese).

The strong, beautifully articulated voice proceeded, 'Sono venuto da voi non come il Capo di Governo ma

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come un'—here he paused for a second, and then flung into the crowd as though in self-dedication, the word 'fratello'.¹ Each syllable was a separate gift. The speaker had made the word sound endearing and intensely human. But there was also fire in it and the freshness of youth and the eternal appeal of brotherhood.

Family ties mean a great deal to the people of Sicily. A few voices shouted 'Bravo, bravo'. The speaker must have heard them, for he raised his left hand—only a few inches—as though in protest. The finality of the gesture was such that it cast the spell of silence and attention over the crowd.

And history took its course. With every fresh sentence, rising sonorously into the immaculate expanse of sky; with every fresh argument, the initial resistance of the crowd was melting. His arguments were nothing so much as subtle flatteries and compliments, the lustre of which, however, never failed to be reflected back upon the speaker himself and his doctrine. Even if his listeners had disagreed with the content of his speech—which apparently they did not, for after ten minutes most of them seemed to care little for doctrine or argument—they would have applauded and shouted. They could appreciate a work of art when they saw one, and they delighted in the performance.

The oration was over after three-quarters of an hour.

¹ I have come to you not as the head of the Government, but as a brother.

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Its success was reflected in practically every face round about me. Cries of 'bravo' and 'Duce' filled the square. And after the song *Giovinezza* had brought the meeting to its conclusion there was no end to complimentary remarks exchanged at the tops of voices. 'Senza scherzi, un gran uomo.' 'Che discorso, bestia, come parla bene.' 'Accidente, un vero Romano si direbbe; invece . . . da dove viene?'¹

When a little later they were dispersing to return to their humble workshops and dingy offices they felt elated, not only by having been won over to a good cause—and what convert doubts that his new cause is anything but good!—but by the delight that comes from enjoying a fine spectacle. They had been made to feel far more important, more 'eternal' than they had ever done before.

5

I am not certain whether Mussolini's speech in front of the Teatro Massimo did the trick of finally confirming his rule in Sicily. Probably no single performance, however remarkable, could have conquered the sceptical nature of the sons of *Sicilia Eterna*. But the first bastions had fallen. The great masses, with their less fastidious minds, swore by him as only quite recently they

¹ 'Joking apart, he's a great man.' 'What a speech, good Lord, how well he speaks.' 'Dammit, a true Roman you would say, yet . . . where does he really come from?'

THE MAN IN PALERMO

had sworn at him, or as they might have sworn by Giolitti or Nitti, or, for that matter, by any popular leader of the Mafia.

I myself, little interested in the issue at stake, had fallen completely under the spell of the oration. It was lucid; it was intelligent—so far as pronouncements before a vast, miscellaneous crowd can ever be that; it showed erudition and an appreciation of culture and beauty. It took into careful consideration the specific regional characteristics of the listeners and yet linked them imperceptibly into the greater unity that was Italy. It glorified the speaker by only the subtlest implications, and never imposed his personality or his doctrine direct upon the audience. He knew all the tricks to make his words conjure up fluttering banners and the radiance of vast horizons. At times his voice sounded almost like a 'cello.

A British audience would have considered the speech theatrical. But the audience was not British, and the speaker had evidently studied every one of its possible reactions.

Even in those days I detested Fascism, but I could not deny that I felt admiration for Mussolini as an orator. This feeling was strengthened on the few later occasions I saw and listened to him. I know that in more recent years his oratory deteriorated; his voice grew impatient and harsh—as do the voices of all dictators; his arguments became increasingly fanciful. He

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began to rely increasingly on catchwords and appeals to national fanaticism; his growing belief that the 'Duce is always right' completely blurred his sense of discrimination.

But we are dealing here with the Duce who conquered *la Sicilia Eterna* and who in those early days disclosed not only a gift for oratory but also the shrewd mind of an intelligent realist, equipped with many of the qualities that make for real statesmanship.

That he possessed also less felicitous features, which finally crowded out the better ones, does not alter the fact that at Palermo he was as inspiring and attractive as the man in Berlin was repulsive.

6

When all was over and the crowd had finally dispersed, leaving the big square to the sun, to a stand with orangeade and lemonade and a few cabs, their horses covered with flies and decorated with long and garish painted ostrich feathers, and the *vetturinos* drowsy under the protection of their white parasols, I felt so pleased with the world and with myself that I went into another café and ordered another *cassatta siciliana*, pink and white, luscious and cool.

Chapter 3

MASTER AND PUPIL



I

The years ran on, and the world learned to regard the speaker from Palermo as a man of intelligence, unprincipled, as was not unc customary among Italian politicians, but astute, in fact, a man of outstanding abilities; and the man in Berlin as an irresponsible demagogue, of low intelligence, no education to speak of, little knowledge of history or the world, and only in his disregard of ethical principles his Italian colleague's equal.

It was quite fitting, though many of us have forgotten it, that for a number of years the man with the funny little moustache looked up to the Italian as his model and diligently copied his ideas and methods. He presented his country with identical catchwords, with similar parades and uniforms, and, unable to invent his own model for a salute, adopted even the non-Nordic salute of his Roman mentor. The world acknowledged that, if

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copy he must, the only fit person to be his example was the man behind the huge desk, in the huge study of the huge Palazzo Venezia in Rome.

Gradually things changed. The man with the moustache began to outgrow his master. Not only because the country that stood behind him was so much bigger than the Duce's, but in a more personal sense. While he and his schemes grew until they finally overshadowed the map not only of Europe, but of the whole world, the man in Rome, though not necessarily his schemes, began to shrink. And in no other respect was that shrinking more pronounced than in his relationship to his pupil in Berlin.

The more the two men and their schemes came together, the more extensively they made use of the special wire that connected their two studies, and of the armoured trains in which they speeded across the snowy Brenner to their meetings, the more the one, so inferior in every way to the other, dominated his former master.

2

There cannot have been many cases in history in which the lesser man has so markedly overshadowed the greater. Many pupils have outgrown their masters. But in all such cases the pupil has proved in the end that in character, intellect, or courage he was the better man.

In our present instance this is not so. Mussolini's better intellect, his Mediterranean cunning, his gift for

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intrigue, his knowledge of the world were of little avail when it came to crossing swords with the hysterical upstart from the Austrian slums.

Situations of such a nature do not come about unless the powers that support one of the two men are stronger or more directly engaged than are those behind the other. While Mussolini, the 'realist', the man brought up in the enlightened school of modern journalism, fed on the rational principles of nineteenth-century Socialism, the self-educated linguist, self-educated violinist, self-educated sportsman, had to rely on his own resources only, the man in Berlin, too lazy and lacking in gifts to teach himself anything worth while, was driven upwards by powers beyond himself.

Mussolini's personal gifts were no match for such powers. He might hold all the aces in his hand, yet at the last moment the other man would suddenly be provided by 'Fate' with an incident or a situation that made all the plans go wrong.

3

I doubt whether history knows many instances of hatred deeper than that felt by Mussolini for his former disciple. The German in his arrogance may have always felt contempt for the *Spaghetti-fressender*¹ leader of a nation of *lazzaroni*; but Mussolini's hatred must be abysmal. His rationalistic Latin mind could not possibly

¹ Spaghetti-devouring.

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admit the existence of powers which, while evading his own grasp, were at the disposal of the German. All he saw was the ill-bred proletarian who had not managed to learn a single foreign language, who could ride neither a horse nor a bicycle, who could not drive a car, or swim, or kick a ball, or dance, who was too little of a man even to drink a glass of wine or to sleep with a woman. '*Madonna, che porcheria!*' Yet over and over again he had to admit the other man's superiority.

For a true recognition of the German's psychological background, few things could be more illuminating than his relationship with Mussolini.

Chapter 4

THE MEDIUM

I

Many people in the past have found arguments in support of the Führer's intelligence by quoting the many instances of his sound judgement and uncanny instinct. Accepting for a moment the theory that he is a vehicle for powers beyond himself, there is nothing puzzling or contradictory in the existence of mediumship, or psychic receptivity, combined with shrewdness.

A man 'possessed' is not possessed all the twenty-four hours of the day. Outside his moments of 'possession' he may be either clever or a dullard, have a beautiful voice or no voice at all, be handsome as Apollo or ugly as Medusa. No-one has ever denied that Hitler has a certain peasant cunning. He is also master of an amazing gift for selecting the right moment or trusting the right person.

But can we imagine that the powers that choose a

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man for their specific purpose would single out someone who in his 'unpossessed' moments is a mere fool? Or that they would choose one whose normal reactions are in direct contradiction to those of his 'possessed' moments? The very fact that a man with Adolf Schicklgruber's limitations of mind and character and his ignorance of the world should so often have foreseen the right event and chosen the right moment suggests that some amplification of already existing personal faculties is in part responsible.

The ability to cast spells over well-meaning British diplomats and eager peeresses may be the exclusive privilege of Adolf Schicklgruber. But the spell he cast over the German nation, the 'most philosophically trained nation in the world'—no longer chirruping about the inspiring view over Berchtesgaden or the beauties of the Prelude to Tristan—that spell was generated from different sources. And so were the 'uncanny' premonitions, the frequent decisions taken against the counsels of all his experts and advisers, in fact, those moments when he acted as the Führer of the Germans.

2

Though Adolf Hitler himself may be quite unaware of the nature of the forces whose vehicle he is, it does not follow that he is unconscious of being a medium.

In his own terminology he speaks of being equipped with 'supernatural powers'. There are many occasions

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on which he refers to this. In *Mein Kampf* he describes the following war-time experience: 'I was eating my dinner in a trench with several comrades. Suddenly a voice seemed to be saying to me, "Get up and go over there." It was so clear and insistent that I obeyed automatically, as if it had been a military order. I walked twenty yards along the trench, carrying my dinner with me, and sat down to go on eating. Hardly had I done so when a flash and deafening report came from the part of the trench I had just left. A stray shell had burst over the group in which I had been sitting, and every member was killed.'

People used as mediums usually have certain psychic gifts, even when in the normal state. Hitler is no exception. Equipped, as he no doubt is, with a certain type (probably hereditary) of 'second sight', he is often able to sense events or effects before they actually materialize. This form of psychism is far more common than is generally assumed. While his friends may be arguing about the opportune course, he acts quickly and in the 'inspired' manner, suitable to his designs.

They would be very puny 'supernatural' masters if they did not endow one of their chief instruments with a measure of psychic faculties: For these are obviously indispensable to a successful execution of their designs.

But not all invisible forces are infallible. Neither are they all-powerful. Even they are forced to adjust their plans to the course of events. And to be their medium

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by no means implies a full comprehension of their designs. For a medium, that is to say a person who is not the master or conscious collaborator of certain forces, but merely their instrument, often lacks the clarity of vision to act as bidden. And no-one is more susceptible to hallucination and the influence of wishful thinking and subconscious desires.

Many of the professional mediums who have been unmasked as frauds may at one time have possessed genuine psychic gifts. They have been driven to fraud because unable to distinguish between the commands of the 'voices' and those of their own desires. Finally, all mediumship is dangerous. It becomes a thousand-fold more so when it is directed towards purely material ends and when its vehicle is a man with power over the destinies of entire nations.

3

The Germans might have refused to follow Hitler's 'supernatural' powers if the whole atmosphere of Germany after the last war had not been so receptive to such influences. The country was riddled with all kinds of psychic currents. Though there were certain 'occult' activities of a serious and scientific kind, the majority of them were spurious, if not positively dangerous.

The conditions created by the war and the defeat were propitious for psychic charlatanism. The nation had lost many of her material goods; inflation had robbed

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her of her money; much of her mental and physical stamina and practically all her beliefs had vanished. The gods that once had reigned supreme, patriotism, social respectability, economic security, the army, even science, had shown their feet of clay. There seemed little within the established order of things that held any promise. A strong religious sense might have pointed a road to salvation. But Christian beliefs, such as they were, were held purely emotionally or intellectually and did not pervade life as a whole.

One section, the largest, resigned itself to gloom and defeatism, brightened only by wishful dreams of the return to former glory. Another, especially in the big cities, danced fervently around the Golden Calf, set up mainly by the *Valuta* (foreign exchange) left behind by foreign visitors, anxious to see examples of the notorious moral dissipation of post-war Germany. The antidote to the precariousness of the present and the hopelessness of the future was sought by that section in experimenting with unending sensual thrills—from drink and drugs to every form of sexual excess.

Those who thought in terms of a sane national reconstruction were a small minority. Most of the aspiring reconstructors were youths, led by ambitious opportunists like Röhm or by fanatical idealists like Hitler. The core of their creed was enmity towards the entire non-German world and towards many within Germany herself. Their banners, though often raised aloft by genuine

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idealism, bore the symbols of hatred and bloodshed. Their names were 'Black Corps' and '*Fehme*' (secret, self-appointed criminal tribunals); their deeds were written in blood. The best-known names of their victims are Rathenau and Erzberger, two leading Cabinet Ministers. Hitler's blood purge of 30th June 1934 was the most spectacular act born of this spirit.

Yet another section (naturally, these various sections overlapped) tried to find its paradise in sensations provided by psychic netherworlds. Where there was no security within the world as established by rational gods, it was sought after by more cryptic means. Germany, and especially Berlin and Munich, abounded with 'psychic' societies, lectures, magazines, study groups, fortune-tellers, astrologers and cheiromancers, cheirographists, physiognomists, phrenologists, hypnotists, and mediums. Communication with the 'other side' was almost as common as that with a friend next door.

Though some of these experiments may have brought solace to those indulging in them, their bulk seemed to express the longings of minds that were unbalanced if not actually diseased. It was typical of the general trend that, whereas on the one hand serious occult work was usually attacked, the charlatans and mountebanks walked about freely.

They would undoubtedly have been treated with disapproval or even have encountered the severity of the law if they had not been protected by a latent tendency

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in their favour. This tendency may not have been admitted in so many words, but the fact remains that many of the most 'respectable' people worshipped at these spurious shrines.

Among those seeking to forge their happiness in unholy flames were members of the many new 'national' parties, all claiming to speak for the awakening Germany ('Deutschland Erwache' was their motto). Eventually all these parties united in the Nazi Party. But in those earlier days, when their ideals were still ambiguous and their doctrines heterogeneous, many of their members indulged in 'mystical' and pseudo-religious activities. At one time one of their heroes, General von Ludendorff, personally tried to assert himself as the prophet of a new religion. Its beliefs were centred in German 'blood' and a cloudy, mystical German paganism.

4

The entire psychic atmosphere of Germany pointed to the fact that what the post-war conditions had brought to visible fruition was merely a streak in the national make-up that had always existed but which during the years of prosperity had been easily held in check. It needed the specific conditions of the times to make the German soul reveal the latent tendency. And this was done with all the lack of self-restraint that was only another national characteristic. In fact, many of

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the truest traits in German psychology only revealed themselves fully when the defeat of 1918, and later the imposition of the Nazi régime, broke all the dams that more temperate systems before them had built up.

The licence in sexual life revealed a sensual depravity that had always been there but had been kept disguised. The same is true of the supernatural strain. Its strength can be gauged when we observe the importance the centuries'-old Niebelungen 'mysticism', pagan dreams and the cloudy notions of Siegfried, have assumed under the Nazis. For all this is merely a variation on the self-same theme which for many centuries has been typical of Germany, of her patriotism and her *kultur*.

Like so much else in Germany the psychic tendency, something which, rightly directed, might have been wholesome, turned into a distorted image of itself: as if it had reached the German soul through some dark mirror.

5

Hitler's mediumship fitted into the psychological landscape of post-war Germany with natural perfection. It was a thousand times more powerful than the corresponding gifts of all the penny-halfpenny psychists, and its purpose was infinitely more clearly defined. Yet the underlying character of darkness and distortion was very similar. He was not the herald of a

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newly found treasure, sought for laboriously though with serenity, and handed over masterfully yet with a humble and pure heart—but its slave. He imagined that his trusteeship of the treasure was one of selfless and noble service, yet he never ceased to put it to the most material uses. Instead of purifying it of what had become debased, he fed it with the flames of fanaticism and obscurantism. The *mystisches, ewiges Deutschland* (mystical, eternal Germany) was the fount of all his dreams and deeds. Yet he never allowed that storehouse of ‘mystical’ inspiration to be illumined by love. The angel that led him into action was always one of hatred, even if at times he placed a withered olive branch in its hands.

And when finally Germans were made to adorn not only their national but even their religious shrines with his portrait, and when in his name strange pagan customs were revived, the ‘religion that was older than that of the man from Galilee’ revealed with frightening clarity what forces moved and inspired him. What forces in the German soul he had evoked. . . .

For all his ‘supernaturalness’ would have led him nowhere but to some murky séance room in a Vienna suburb, if its tendency had not corresponded to the inner aspirations of the Germans themselves.

You cannot become the leader of a nation unless you are borne upwards by the true ambitions of that nation. And it is immaterial whether for the time being the

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people themselves are conscious of the deeper meaning of their ambitions or not.

No man can become a national leader who merely follows behind his followers. To become their leader he must sense and divine what the nation craves for most. Once Fate has equipped him with the necessary gifts and placed him in the right historical moment, then the common wave will carry him on. Medium or no medium, he will be accepted and regarded as the symbol of national strivings.

If we maintain that Hitler does not represent the 'true' Germany and has never been elected by a clear majority (which, incidentally, is not true), we merely disregard the most basic truths about leadership. Had Hitler been unrepresentative of German desires and longings, even a 100 per cent national vote would never have enabled him to remain at the helm.

Powers stronger than parliamentary majorities drew the saintly Brüning out of office. The same powers raised Hitler into it. For he marched towards goals aspired to by the deepest fibres of the German heart. The words his 'guides' made him use and the methods they made him adopt were not alien to the essential Germanic nature. He merely spoke and acted more frankly and with greater violence.

Part Two

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Introduction

THE SPIRIT OF A NATION

I

When in the summer of 1939 the Chancellor of the German Reich set out upon a war against Poland, a war which, though feared beforehand by the Germans, in the end was hailed by them as doing away with the arrogance and the *Grössenwahn*¹ of the detested *Saupolacken*;² and, when by this action, he forced the British Government to declare war on Germany, we in this country were officially told that the fight was not against Germany but merely against Nazism.

Few countries can ever have been inspired to fight in a just cause by a more misleading battle-cry. Those of us who, for years, had tried to point out that there were no two Germanys—the one kindly and docile, asking only to be left in peace to read poetry and listen to beautiful music in the moonlit courtyard of Heidelberg

¹ Megalomania.

² Filthy Poles.

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Castle, and the other, as represented by an insignificant Nazi minority, called warmongers and almost ostracized.

2

No single fallacy is more responsible for our misguided attitude towards Germany and, finally, our military unpreparedness, than that of the two Germanys. According to this fallacy Nazism was a creed, forced by an unfair Versailles Treaty and the mischief of the Allies upon a well-meaning Germany. And of course it was completely alien to the German character.

Our own political mistakes in the past may possibly have precipitated the victory of Nazism. To claim that they have given birth to it is like saying that Mr. Baldwin's 'flapper vote' is responsible for the existence of the democratic system in Britain. Even the philosophies of Nietzsche and Dr. Adolf Rosenberg himself cannot be held responsible for Nazism.

We shall hardly win this war and certainly not the following peace if in our judgement of Germany we continue to be guided by sentimentality instead of by facts. Yet many people still prefer to rely on personal reminiscences and individual and necessarily limited impressions rather than on more general truths and history. The theory of the two Germanys has grown almost entirely on the soil of such personal recollections. The charming music we heard in Germany; the moving

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poems our German governess taught us when we were children; those delightful *Weinstuben* where we spent so many a gay evening; the kindness of the *Frau Professor* under whose guidance our son was allowed to peep into the inspiring realms of German *Kultur*; the nice young German we met at Munich who was 'so terribly keen on everything British'—it is these things which have formed the political views on Germany held by most English people. The underlying spirit and the history of a nation are little reflected in small individual incidents nor even in the achievements of a few exceptional men.

What shapes the civilization of a people are her innermost ambitions and her living faith. It is the conduct of the majority and the historical actions of the country as a whole that reflect its civilization. The incidents and personalities on which so many Britons hung their theories about Germany were as typical of that country as are the antics of a small Mayfair set or our drawing-room Communists of the life and the people of Britain.

3

If we accept religious beliefs—and Britain's civilization and social progress are rooted in such beliefs—we must also accept the reality of spiritual forces, unknown to man yet in some mysterious way guiding him. From belief in God and the Son of God, down to the belief in

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angels (or whatever else we may choose to call guardian spirits), our whole faith is permeated by that acceptance. However disinclined we may be to express these beliefs in so many words, in our prayers we seek the help of those guardians and put our trust in them.

As good we regard those spirits under whose guidance we have gradually risen from savagery and limitations to greater knowledge and an increasing mastery over ourselves and the world round about us. But the very essence of the world as we know it is polarity: action evokes reaction, opposite forces are in incessant conflict with one another. Good is always opposed by evil and the beautiful by the ugly. Though we may disagree on minor issues within that conflict, there are certain absolute standards of both good and evil, of the beautiful and the ugly, which we all accept as true.

The world of action as we experience it tangibly, is only one of the manifestations of the world of the spirit. Conflicts and polarities, similar to those that rule our whole material existence, must also exist in that other world. And there must be spiritual powers opposed to those whose essential goodness is the very fount of our religious beliefs.

Christ Himself and all the masters and saints of every great religion before and after Him, acknowledged the reality of such powers. Philosophy acknowledges them, even though it may call them by different names. Whatever their origins and designs, in all religions they

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represent a dark principle. Their aims are always recognized as inimical to those of man's motives that he knows to be good.

Whereas in our individual lives we are content to call any inner conflict between our virtues and our failings, between our better and our lower natures, one of good and evil, the conflicts in the national sphere we regard more ambiguously as those of ideals or theories. Yet essentially it is always the same conflict of light and darkness.

The forces of light, to manifest visibly, use for their ends certain individuals—a Saint Francis as well as a Florence Nightingale, and countless lesser men and women. The opposite forces likewise focus their tendencies in certain people, who serve as their vehicles. They may choose an Ivan the Terrible as well as a Gilles de Rais or a Jack the Ripper. It is through such individuals as these that they fulfil their nature in the world of matter.

Life being the complex and self-contradictory process that it is, both principles are simultaneously active in the majority of people. No man is completely 'white' or completely 'black'. What is decisive is which of the two tendencies prevails; and what applies to individuals applies equally, though in more complex form, to nations.

Nations are never all good or all bad. Yet in them as in individuals certain tendencies predominate. It is

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through these tendencies that the spirit of a nation reveals itself most clearly. In most cases national tendencies do not differ so much according to standards of absolute right and wrong as to certain indigenous gifts. However much such gifts may differ from one another, they may yet be governed by the same conception of good and bad. Moreover, they will be intimately related to the racial, climatic, and geographical peculiarities of the country and be inseparable from them.

Once we accept the idea that the universe is not a haphazard accumulation of physical accidents, but the expression of an order springing from a primary cause—call it by whatever name we will—we are constrained to admit that it must be that original force and its agents, such as the spirit of a nation, which are responsible for providing the specific conditions, without which that nation would not be able to express the tendencies most potent in it. Any one tendency may change in time, yet over a long period it will remain the prevailing one.

The difference in national tendencies is not necessarily one of gifts. It may also be a different conception of fundamental ethics. This difference will reveal whether a nation is in the main guided by such principles as we in the Western world have come to regard as Christian, or not.

Chapter 5

THE BLOOD THAT IS PURE



I

Among the tendencies inherent in the spirit of the German nation few are more revealing than that of 'racialism'. For the doctrine of the 'pure' blood is not a new one in Germany. Its Nazi version is merely the culmination of beliefs that have inspired Germany, nourished her thought, and shaped her character for centuries.

What the Nazis call the *sanctity* of the Aryan blood was before them taken for granted as the *superiority* of the German blood. No other doctrine has been adhered to by the Nazis more strictly; with no other have fewer compromises been made. It is the foundation stone of the entire edifice of Nazism. 'Side by side with the religion of the eternal soul stands the religion of the Blood,'¹ declares Alfred Rosenberg, Germany's official

¹ Alfred Rosenberg, *Mythos of the Twentieth Century* (German edition), p. 258.

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'Cultural Leader'. Nazi views on social order, foreign affairs, Russia, finance, military tactics, may have changed. The purity of the blood has remained the first commandment of their creed.¹

2

Ever since Barbarossa, Germany has believed that she is the chosen nation. For hundreds of years, German poets as well as simpletons, scientists as well as soldiers, have believed that 'am deutschen Wesen wird die Welt genesen'.²

When I was a child I had a German governess. This was about six years before the last war, when Nazism was as yet unborn. She was a cultured person of over sixty, and brought up in the traditions of pre-Bismarckian Germany. During her lessons she never missed an opportunity to recite the inspiring rhyme quoted above. She also did her very best to instil into me and my brothers as deep a contempt for our own country as an

¹ The actual words of this commandment in Hitler's programme are, 'Civic rights may only be enjoyed by those in whose veins flows the German Aryan blood without any impurity or ancient mixture with any other blood.'

² 'The German nature (being) shall heal (save) the world.' It is not without significance that this line from Emmanuel Geibel's poem *Deutschlands Beruf* (1861) is not quoted in Germany in its original and less arrogant version, 'Und es mag am deutschen Wesen einmal noch die Welt genesen', but in the distorted one, quoted above. Not only did this version replace the original one, but it became so popular as to be generally accepted as a national proverb.

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admiration for Germany. She was not a product of Dr. Göbbels' endeavours to make the world see the Only True Gospel; she was the daughter of an educated pastor in one of the smaller provincial towns of Germany; and the culture that had shaped her mentality was the pleasant culture of the poets, the music, and all the other attractive things that we, non-Germans, fondly imagined to be the sources of German civilization.

It needed Nazism, the undisguised and concentrated manifestation of Germanism, to present the belief in the superiority of German blood as a definite doctrine.¹

¹ The German version of the superiority of the 'Nordic' race has no foundation whatever in fact. Though it has always formed the conscious or subconscious background of the many variants of Pan-Germanism, it was first formulated as a pseudo-scientific theory by Gobineau in his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-5); expounded further in *L'Aryan*, a truly fantastic work by Lapouge (1899) and by the Germanized Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Richard Wagner's son-in-law.

In the words of Professor Julian Huxley, *Race in Europe* (O.U.P., 1939), 'the theory of Nordic race has no present existence. Its former existence is hypothetical. . . . The contentions which ascribe to the "Nordic race" most of the great advances of mankind . . . appear to be based on nothing more serious than self-interest and wish-fulfilment. The great steps in civilization . . . were first taken in the Near East, by peoples who by no stretch of imagination could be called "Nordic". . . . Indeed, where the Nordic type is most prevalent, there is no evidence of any ancient civilization having been attained. . . . In modern times the greatest achievements of civilization have occurred in regions of the greatest mixture of types. The Nordic type may be held up as an object of propaganda, but this ideal is genetically quite unattainable, and will not affect the biological realities of the situation. . . . Furthermore, we find it far from true that men of pure or even approximately Nordic type have been the great leaders of thought or action. . . . Racialism is a myth, and a dangerous myth.'

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3

The idea of the purity and, subsequently, the superiority of a particular nation or class is not a new one. In India we find it to this day. The Old Testament Jews adhered to it. Among them it was especially the tribe of the Levites, the priests, the purity of whose blood was extolled and jealously guarded. But in those days there existed definite reasons for safeguarding the blood of the nation as well as that of a particular caste. Esoteric though those reasons may appear to us, they seemed justified and were accepted generally.

Only the priest and the initiate were entitled to possess faculties that could reveal certain mysteries of existence. Those secrets were too valuable to be imparted to anyone but those who, by inheritance and special training, were worthy to administer religious truths. Without the 'pure' blood, which conferred the requisite faculties, it was impossible to partake of these truths. It was this purity which guaranteed that certain spiritual faculties should be acquired by those alone who were meant to possess them. On no account must they be transmitted through the veins of outsiders.

4

With the appearance and the subsequent sacrifice of Jesus Christ things changed fundamentally. No longer was there to be one chosen nation, one clan or family

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exalted above all others. Priests or warriors were not better than any other caste. The brotherhood of all men was the core of the new teaching. Spiritually all men were equal, and secrets, formerly hidden except from the few, were available to all.

By recognizing—in the fullest sense of the word—Christ, man partakes of the sublimest spiritual mystery, and becomes a ‘free being’. In consequence, whatever his inherited spiritual powers, the individual himself must develop them. Even the most esoteric secrets of the Christian gospel can be revealed to anyone. But not without individual effort. The whole of Christianity is a religion of such effort and of personal responsibility. No longer is there either need or room for powers guaranteed by inheritance alone. No longer is *my father* nor even the High Priest himself, the gatekeeper to *my* kingdom of heaven. That kingdom is open to all who are willing to seek it. And since personal effort is the key to the kingdom, faculties bestowed solely by inheritance through blood are not only not required but a possible hindrance. What may have been of value in the past has been replaced by something that reflects man’s divinity, willed for him by his creator, far more directly.

The new gospel meant equality. Men may be unequal in the accidents of their birth and their gifts, but in the face of truth none is better nor worse than another. Mixed and not segregated blood is the substance

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through which the Christ most readily reveals Himself. One blood for all, or, as Saint Paul says, 'Of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.' Frontiers of blood must be pulled down. For it is the man of mixed, or 'equalized' blood who can truly understand his neighbour and feel compassion with him. Only he can be humble before his neighbour. And humility and brotherhood are the corner-stones of the new creed.

What the Old Testament taught was primarily the Law. The command to do right was given to all; but the power to comprehend it, only to few. 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (Saint John 1. 17). Only truth equalizes men, for it is the same for the king and the slave. But to see truth is not identical with comprehending and living it. The transformation of the word of truth into flesh is an act of grace. With the coming of Christ truth and grace were free to all.

Chapter 6

CHRIST IN GERMANY

I

Christianity¹ and civilization, as we understand them and strive after them in this country, are so complementary that for most people they

¹ I wish to make it quite clear that the word Christianity as frequently used throughout this book is always meant to denote the teaching of Jesus Christ, and never refers to any particular Church.

Neither for a number of years before nor during the present war, have the Churches been able to make of the gospel, whose guardians they are, an active power in the life of the nation nor to provide that spiritual leadership that might have been expected from them. In saying this, I do not wish to imply any criticism, but am merely stating facts which the Churches themselves would be the last to deny.

It is equally a truism to say that ever since the last war, many of the best Christians in this country have turned away from their Churches and have tried to live their faith in a non-denominational way. Whatever the reasons for this state may be, the fact remains that some of the best Christian efforts come from sources completely unrelated to the Churches.

Though in the past the Christian aspects of British civilization may have been inseparable from work of the Churches, to-day this is hardly the case. I should therefore like the reader to bear in mind that all allusions to Christian matters have a completely non-denominational character and refer to the essence of the Christian teaching and not to what has become of it in the hands of the Churches.

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have become practically identical. But our civilization is a product both of the Christian gospel and of Greek and Roman civilization. In our conception of politics, social order, and education our classical inheritance has played a decisive part.

From 55 B.C. till A.D. 412 Britain, together with most Western and South-European countries (as far East as Hungary and Transylvania), was able to enjoy the civilizing influences of the Roman domination, from Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Diocletian, down to Constantine. 'Between the invasion of Julius Caesar and the real Roman conquest, some notion of town life had been borrowed from Roman Gaul, and during the Roman occupation the Britons learned to live in towns'¹—the first important step on the road to civilization. A properly organized administrative, social, and commercial life, fairly advanced conceptions of law and justice, roads and baths, became part of our daily existence.

However much later invaders in the fifth and sixth centuries may have destroyed the visible monuments of Roman civilization, the people of London and Colchester, Verulam and Gloucester, Leicester and Bath, up to Ripon in the north and Wales in the west, had been too deeply inculcated with the spirit emanating from Rome to remain the same as they had been five hundred years earlier.

¹ Sir Robert S. Raith, *British History* (Nelson & Sons Ltd).

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East of the Rhine and of the Main the Roman Empire never gained foothold. While in this country people learnt to converse on a wide range of subjects and to assimilate a conception of the deity that was progressive and liberal, the Germans remained barbarians, unaffected by the light that radiates from an advanced civilization.

According to Tacitus, they had no cities. 'Neither stone, nor brick, nor tiles were employed. In the most inclement winter the German was satisfied with a scanty garment made of the skin of some animal. . . . The use of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to them.' At a time when Rome's love of letters was shared by most parts of her Empire and 'even the most Northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric', the Germans 'were unacquainted with the use of letters'; and the use of letters, Gibbon tells us, 'is the principal circumstance that distinguishes a civilized people from a herd of savages. . . . The Germans passed their lives in a state of ignorance and poverty. . . . The lazy warrior consumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of sleep and food. They gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often stained their numerous and drunken assemblies.'¹

One look at the map of the Roman Empire is suffi-

¹ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i.

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cient to explain to us much that has happened in German history in the last fifteen hundred years.

2

Whereas Rome gave Britain some sort of preparation for the new Christian gospel, Germany was completely deprived of that advantage. The most important ethical and cultural influence during the fifteen hundred years between our Lord's birth and the Renaissance left her practically untouched. Britain, and most of the West European countries, were in a position to assimilate and identify themselves with the new doctrine within a fairly short time. In Germany, when that doctrine was finally accepted, it remained no more than loosely superimposed. It was impossible for her—as indeed it would have been for most nations—to make up for the loss of five hundred years' education. When towards the end of the eighteenth century she joined the other great European states she was in the position of a man who has spent the years between seven and twenty-one in deep slumber, and who, on awakening from it, finds that he has been deprived of the spiritual and mental advance corresponding to his physical growth.

Moreover, we must remember that whereas in the British Isles the conversion to Christianity began in the fourth century, Saint Columba finally introducing the new creed into Scotland in 563 and Saint Augustine

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into England in 596, Prussia, the core and crown of future Germany, did not become Christian until the thirteenth century. By that time the gods of Valhalla, the heritage of Barbarossa, the restricted vision that saw no further than the German forests, the German sword and German warfare, had too deeply influenced the national soul to be completely replaced by a newer doctrine.

For a true appreciation of the reality of Germany as it presents itself to the modern world, we must not look to the Catholic German Empire of Charles V and the Habsburgs, but to the more northern Protestant Germany, that which is the foundation and centre of the modern Reich. For the ancestors of that Reich were not the Habsburgs and a culture influenced by the south, but Prussia, the Teutonic Knights, and, finally, the Hohenzollern family.

And in that Germany, which stretches from the Baltic to the Black Forest, the long winter nights were alien to serenity of vision. They induced instead nebulous mystical dreams. Lightheartedness and kindliness were not at home in those lands. And Valhalla was not the super-national paradise of the Christian doctrine, open to all, but the refuge of the Teutons only. It was the promised land of the brave Teuton who knew how to fight and to die, who glorified death in battle, and who in Siegfried's death rather than in his life saw the highest consummation of virtue.

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3

In a world of such ideas religious beliefs easily became identical with racial and national ones. The demarcation line between Valhalla and Germania was invisible. What was best and noblest was also Teutonic. And since the followers of the martial creed had been untouched by the clear thought and logic with which Rome, and through Rome ancient Hellas, had lightened the mind of Western Europe, and since for many centuries they had remained enclosed within their darkening forests and windswept planes, their mysticism and nationalism remained similarly cloudy and dark. Their dreams sought not the sunlit spheres of the Christian heaven with a God 'girt with a golden girdle' and with 'head and hairs as white as snow'. Not the rising of the God in light and glory inspired their vision, but the murkiness of the *Götterdämmerung*.

What stood out most clearly in that faith was the idea of the supremacy of *deutsches Wesen* and the worship of war. Tacitus knew what he was talking about when he said that those early Germans 'hate peace, and think it weak to win with sweat what can be won with blood'.

Two thousand years later Hitler, not the non-typical German, as some of his British apologists would have it, but the crystallized symbol of his people, merely confirmed the creed of the early Teutons with the words, 'War is the most natural, the most everyday matter.

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War is eternal. War is life.' Can we be surprised if the descendant of the earlier worshippers of Götterdämmerung spends long evenings listening to Wagner and shedding tears over the tortuous entanglements and doings at Valhalla.

In the Christian gospel war and the sword are accepted in exceptional circumstances when no other method is of avail. Where cancer threatens a healthy body the knife must be used. But the whole spirit of that gospel eulogizes not the sword but the forces opposed to it. For one or two lines about the sword we find hundreds that preach conquest by peaceful methods. Since Christ was not a dreamer of fancies but a realist, He accepted the sword as an inevitable evil, but an evil nevertheless. In Germany, which to-day, as ever, is not merely a nation in arms but an armed doctrine in action, that evil has always been the highest symbol of national aspiration and virtue. By no amount of goodwill can we refute the conclusion that if Hitler represents Germany, as he obviously does, and if he is the vehicle of powers that are the national guardians, those powers represent evil in something more than a purely symbolical sense, and are diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Christian gospel.

Hitler is as little an anomaly in the life and history of the German people as was William II or Bismarck or Frederick the Great or Barbarossa. These were as much the recognized exponents of the German faith as Saint

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Francis and the Christian martyrs were exponents of Christianity. Their people followed them blindly, not because Bismarck was fond of dogs and Frederick played the flute and wrote bad poetry in French, not even because Adolf Schicklgruber is devoted to music and paints watercolours, but because such leaders as these have succeeded more than any others in fulfilling German ambitions.

4

The spirit guiding a nation knows full well why it leads that nation in a specific direction. The history of a country is not an accumulation of accidents, as has been implied before, but a process of logical, though complex, evolution. It is not fortuitous that even after Germany had become Christian her relationship with Rome, then the only trustee of Christianity, was never satisfactory.

As far as the majority of Germans and German civilization as a whole are concerned, Christianity was never more than a superstructure, affecting the nation's roots and the sap that rose from them but little. Mystics such as Meister Eckhart or Jacob Boehme were, unlike Milton in England, not the mouthpiece and expression of the nation's innermost dreams, but exceptions, outsiders.

The more typical exponents of religion in Germany were rarely much concerned with keeping clear the

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boundary that separated what was right in the eyes of their creed from what was right in the eyes of the German State. Their acquiescence in, and even, approval of, political tyranny is an old phenomenon. By frightening the world with the bogey of Bolshevism, Hitler was not the first German tyrant who, for a time at least, gained the support of the German trustees of the Christian gospel. Four hundred years previously Martin Luther himself set the significant example. 'The crux of Martin Luther's political ethic lay in his fear of anarchy and his subsequent willingness to sanction State-power to the point of tyranny. Here Christian pessimism generated an ethic which can hardly be distinguished from Machiavellian cynicism.'¹

So we cannot be surprised if to-day even the so-called Christian Churches in Germany not only accept Hitler's policies and Hitler's war, but even exalt him for these. After the defeat of France the *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt*, one of the most important theological publications in Germany, wrote, 'Like a rock is our loyalty to the Führer and his decisions. . . . He who gives new justice to a whole world. May God who has given us victory upon victory, be with our Führer.' And the *Hamburgische Kirchenzeitung*, another organ of the Evangelical Church, identified the Führer as an instrument of God,

¹ Dr. R. Niebuhr, Professor of Christian Ethic at the Union Theologic Seminary, New York, in an article in the *Spectator*, 22nd September 1939.

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stating that the 'restoration of German power in Europe is in accordance with the law of God'.¹

If the Church speaks thus, it becomes unavoidable that the German people should adopt an attitude towards their Führer which to a real Christian must appear sacrilegious. We read in a German publication that 'millions of Germans when twilight beckons light candles placed at either side of a picture of Hitler, kneel in their homes before his effigy, and worship their saviour'. In one of the largest cities the main hall of the railway station contains an altar-like pedestal decorated with burning candles and flowers and crowned by a portrait of Hitler. Women kneel in adoration in front of this image.

It is more surprising, however, to find that even the Roman Catholic Church in Germany should have found no difficulty in replacing their adherence to God by one to Germany and her Führer. The distinguished Roman Catholic Professor of Dogmatic Theology, Dr. Karl Adam, gave an address at Aachen in which he said, 'We Catholics are not merely Christians and Catholics but German Christians, German Catholics. This "German" is not something which came to be added on to our Christianity as something external to it, for then our Christianity would be underlying, the permanent and formative thing, but exactly the other way round—

¹ Reported in the *Schweizer Evangelischer Pressedienst*, 24th July 1940, and in the Swedish paper *Vecko-Posten*, 18th July 1940.

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the permanent and abiding element is our *Natura Germanica*.¹

The corresponding Credo of a British Catholic illustrates the gulf that separates true Christianity from its German version. It is given in the words of a British Catholic, at least as distinguished and as good a patriot as is the German theologian. 'I am a loyal servant of my country, but God's servant first,' said Thomas More, Chancellor of England. And with these identical words, Cardinal Hinsley has affirmed the attitude of British Catholics in the present war.

No-one is more illuminating about what Christianity really means in Germany than Alfred Rosenberg, that fantastic but official leader of Germany's 'spiritual life'. In his *Mythos of the Twentieth Century*, which is regarded in Germany as the official 'gospel' and which every German must read, he expresses the German attitude to God with that crude outspokenness that is so refreshing a sign of modern pronouncements from across the Rhine. He sums up his voluminous 'bible' with the words, 'God whom we worship would not exist if our (German) blood did not exist.'

Indeed, German Christianity has never been what it is in other countries, a religion of compassion, humility, and, above all, brotherhood; but rather an obscure mysticism, in which the pagan past, Jesus, and the Ger-

¹ Quoted by *Kirchenblatt*, 31st October 1940.

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man blood are assigned equal parts and in which the only light falls upon the blade of the sword.

5

Thanks to the outspokenness of the Nazis, Germany has revealed to the world not merely her non-Christian but her anti-Christian attitude.

Christianity's fundamental precepts are those of love, humility, and charity. Modern Germany does not accept them. 'To-day it is clear,' the official German 'bible' says, 'to every true German that such a doctrine of universal love struck at the very soul of Nordic Europe.'¹ And if in the past Germany showed any respect for Christianity this was due exclusively to the fact, we are told, that 'Christianity has been ennobled by the devotion of millions of Germans'.² Thus, if ever there is to be a church in Germany, 'the ideal of brotherly love must be replaced by that of national honour'.³

6

Hitler made the idea of the purity of blood the guiding principle of Nazism and he persecuted the Jews because he could not help himself. Something stronger than his own mind or will—the primeval genii who guided him—willed him to do so. Their power sprang from the very marrow of his Germanic faith.

¹ A. Rosenberg, *Mythos of the Twentieth Century*, p. 155.

² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 608.

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And he fought not only the Jews, but also the Christian faith, both Catholic and Protestant. Yet it was not alone that subterranean urge which made him fight them. His war against them was waged for reasons of a very realistic polity. He knew full well that Christianity stood for everything that he was inimical to, and that there could be no compromise between the two creeds. The Christian religion is for him one which 'whether in its White, Black or Yellow guise, poisons our soul, our European races. Its life is our death. That we have not died is due to the might [*Macht*] of the Germanic soul, of a soul which so far has prevented the victory of both Rome and Jerusalem'.¹

Let us not forget that before Hitler had fixed his gaze upon Austria and Czechoslovakia and Poland and the British Isles, he had turned an eye, aglow with hatred, upon the Faulhabers and Niemöllers, the few exceptional individuals who were trying to keep their loyalty to Christ stronger than that to the pagan gods of the dark past and the pagan gods of the even darker present.

British apologists of Nazism have always been at pains to explain to us that this new creed was never anti-Christian. It fought the Churches only when these 'dabbled in politics'. Yet here is what the official Guardian of Catholicism has to say of the anti-Christian character of Nazism. In his famous Encyclical, 'Mit bren-

¹ A. Rosenberg, *Mythos of the Twentieth Century*, p. 258.

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nender Sorge' ('With Burning anxiety') Pope Pius XI declared that the Nazi rulers were not merely antagonistic to the Church but set upon a course calculated to uproot Christianity. He spoke of 'blasphemies in word, writing, and picture', of 'a thousand forms of organized bondage', and denounced the whole of the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. 'He who takes the race or the people or the State out of the system of their earthly valuation, and makes them the ultimate norm of all . . . perverts and falsifies the order of things created and commanded by God. The laws of man that are in direct contradiction with the natural law bear an initial defect, that no violent means, no outward display of power can remedy.'

A few years later the Archbishop of Westminster added to this unequivocal pronouncement by saying, 'The world has now before it a mass of records and documents which prove to all minds open to evidence that the Nazi system is essentially un-Christian. . . . There is no use in denying the persecution of the Catholic and Confessional Churches.'¹

In one of his more unguarded moments Herr Alfred Rosenberg revealed Hitler's true intentions with regard to the Christian Churches. At a private party gathering held at Nürnberg in 1938 he made it quite clear that he was expressing not merely his own but also the views of the Führer. 'I wish to emphasize,' he said, 'that my

¹ Broadcast speech, 21st January 1941.

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replies are in harmony with the Führer's opinions. . . That the Catholic Church and also the Confessional (Lutheran) Church must disappear from the life of our People is my full conviction, and I believe I am entitled to say that this is also the Führer's viewpoint. . . . The development of our teaching scheme in schools of all categories is of such an anti-Christian type that the growing generation will be forewarned against the black-coat swindle. . . . But we have another means of pressure also, and that is the financial one. But here also we must proceed prudently, although systematically, so as to cut the financial arteries supplying those clergy whom we cannot win over.¹

¹ Quoted by N. Micklem, in *National Socialism and Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 1939).

Chapter 7

THE CIVILIZATION OF GERMANY



I

In the past most people in this country have assumed unquestioningly that in view of her philosophers, her music, and her impressive scientific achievements Germany must be a highly civilized country.

Can civilization be gauged—as is so often done—by the amount of printer's ink or soap used by a nation, by the length of her motor roads, the number of her factories, even by the beauty of her music, or the profundity of her philosophies? Germany certainly excelled in all these respects. She also led us to identify industry and her great number of men of exceptional talent with civilization.

Let us first examine her claims on this last account. Is it not perhaps natural that a big country which is strong and young and, moreover, situated at the cross roads of different cultural movements, should produce important writers or artists? And has not every big European

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nation produced comparatively just as many great men as Germany has, if not more? Taking the size of the country into consideration, would it not be right to say that Italy, Holland, and Spain have produced many more outstanding personalities than Germany has—especially if we deduct Mozart and Haydn and Schubert and Heine and Mendelssohn and Hugo Wolff and Rilke and Strauss, and countless others who were Austrians or Jews or both?

Russia has produced in the last hundred and fifty years an extremely impressive array of writers. Lermontov, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoi, Chekhov, Gorki, Dostoevski have probably had a far more profound influence upon the thought and literature of Europe than have perhaps any half-dozen nineteenth-century writers of any other country. Yet would we on this account claim that the Russia of the nineteenth century was a highly civilized country?

2

What then is civilization? According to the dictionary, it is the act or state of reclaiming from the savage state. But this definition, correct though it be, is not exhaustive. A country is civilized when through centuries of effort and practice it has developed the gift for curbing its more savage desires and reactions and strengthening what is best in it. Only when such a gift becomes almost an instinct can it claim to be civilized. It is this unpre-

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meditated, instinctive acting and reacting in the right way that is the true test of civilization.

Our notions of civilization are so vague because we use words carelessly. Thus when we mean civilization we probably say culture, and when we mean culture we say civilization.

Culture is mainly the product of the mind, civilization that of character. While culture concerns our well-being, civilization affects our very being. Culture flows from intellect enlivened by emotions and is shaped by technique; civilization—from emotions filtered through the intellect. While civilization must be firmly rooted in morality, culture may float above morality, touching it only occasionally. Culture expresses the feminine principle in life; civilization, the masculine. Culture evokes admiration; the response to civilization is respect. Without culture life becomes boorish and is void of many of the things that make it worth living; without civilization it loses its very purpose.

But whatever civilization may be, it depends little upon the gift for writing beautiful music—which is the sphere of culture—or that for efficiently administering an office, which has nothing to do with culture or civilization.

If you inadvertently step on my toes and I flare up and call you a scoundrel or shout, 'Was fällt Ihnen denn ein, Sie Flegel?'¹—as would in such circumstances

¹ 'What's the big idea, you lout!'

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happen in Germany—I am not civilized. But if hundreds of years of the civilizing process have provided me with the instinctive strength and technique to suppress the possible pain to my toe, to suppress my primitive impulse to 'blow up', and to transform it within the fraction of a second into a smile and the words, 'Never mind,' or even, 'It's my fault'—then I am civilized. What reveals civilization is the spontaneous manner in which primitive negative reactions are automatically transformed into those that reason and consideration would demand.

Civilization goes, of course, much further. Its range includes such different subjects as the improvement of social conditions, respect for the views of an opponent, and the recognition of the spiritual liberty and equality of man. Whereas the existence of a genuine democracy will imply civilization—the democratic system by its very nature being unworkable in a non-civilized community—cultural achievement, genius for organization, or the outstanding talents of certain exceptional personalities, do not necessarily express civilization. They may or may not go hand in hand with it, but they do not depend upon it.

Yet when Germany's thinkers and composers enriched European culture, we spoke of civilization. When her scientists produced new dyes and new chemicals, we spoke of civilization. When her sense of discipline and co-ordination filled us with envy, we

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spoke of civilization. And we forgot that civilization is essentially the expression of a mature character, and not merely of a good brain or dexterous hand. You can have a highly developed culture unsupported by character just as you can have civilization deficient in culture. But civilization without strong moral beliefs and, finally, a religious disposition is impossible.

The Germans themselves did their very best to muddle and blind us. Every successful German book, every speed record of their motor-cars, was immediately trumpeted to the world as proof of their civilization. Cleverly they always used the word *Kultur*, crowding under that misleading heading every type of German success and concealing with it every type of Pan-German design.

3

Christianity is the religion of all. It cannot possibly belong to one Church, caste, nation, or race. Individualism is the channel through which it reveals itself. Without individualism our entire Christian civilization would be unthinkable.

The compulsions and persecutions in the name of Christianity which so often in the past were used to destroy individualism, belong to the history of the Churches, and have nothing whatsoever to do with the creed whose name they may have borne.

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Nazism has condemned individualism as a sign of decadent democracy. Pre-Nazi Germans believed themselves intensely individualistic. In reality they were merely lacking in a true feeling of community and fellowship, for each regarded his personal views as the only valid ones. Thus their 'individualism' represented nothing so much as the inability to acknowledge a divergent point of view. What they called individualism was in reality particularism. Had it not been for this, the comparatively small country would not have been divided into thirty-six(1) different States.

'We are nothing but particularists,' Goethe says of his own people, 'there is no hope of any general agreement; everyone stands merely for the views of his own province, of his own town, aye, even of himself. We may have to wait for a long time until we develop some common denominator. . . . The French and the English stick far more together and consider one another. In Germany every one thinks only of himself and doesn't bother about his neighbour.'¹

This state of things reveals not individualism but the egotism of uncivilised minds. Usually it goes hand in hand with lack of real originality of thought and of individual initiative. The Germans were always unhappy if they had no leaders or systems that gave some compulsory anchorage to their thought and a valid direc-

¹ Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe* (German edition, Ph. Reclam publ.), vol. ii, pp. 14, 76.

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tive to their actions. Only thus could the weight of making individual decisions be lightened.

Long before the Gestapo descended upon the European scene, Germany was already a military and a police State. Regimentation and blind obedience were the rails along which life proceeded in orderly fashion. 'I only need to look through my window to see how things are with us. No boy is allowed to crack his whip or sing a song without a policeman appearing immediately and stopping him. Everything is so arranged as to make our youth docile at the earliest age and to drive out of them all naturalness and originality. In the end nothing remains but the Philistine.'¹ These words do not describe the conditions brought about by Herr Himmler's young gentlemen, but those that Goethe saw a hundred and twenty years ago in Weimar, the most liberal and most advanced German town at the time.

The Nazi denial of individualism represents an old doctrine that has been driven to its logical conclusion and expressed with that violent boldness which is probably the only original contribution of Nazism to German history.

There have always been Britons unable to see anything but the shortcomings of democracy. They disguised their faulty vision by advising us to copy German methods of regimentation and suppression, and mistook the need for greater efficiency and better co-

¹ Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, vol. iii, p. 177.

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ordination of our efforts for a need to annihilate individualism. Yet what else is true democracy but a pronounced individualism voluntarily submitting to discipline?

4

Is German regimentation, even within the spheres in which it may be justified, really the success that our own little Hitlers claim it to be?

When in 1939 and 1940 the Horror Teutonicus swept over one Continental country after another, they pointed awe-struck to the final proof of the infallibility of German methods. But then came the air battles over Britain, and these showed the reverse side of the German medal.

In theory the Germans should have swept our Air Force from the air in no time. They had the advantage of calling the tune and hence of surprise; they attacked in hundreds where we were able to oppose them only in dozens; they had experience of battle gained in Spain, Poland, Norway, Holland, and Belgium. The experience of our own fighters was still rather green. And what were the results? German losses were at a ratio of three or four to our one. That these results were not a flash in the pan was confirmed over and over again, and the Germans themselves acknowledged our superiority by their frantic search for new tactics, and finally by abandoning open battle almost completely.

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A certain percentage of our superiority was no doubt due to the better quality of our machines. But this by itself could not have been responsible for more than a possible drawing even. Even the better training of our air personnel could not account for the sheer incredible superiority. Neither must we forget that in the battles of those epic summer months the Luftwaffe still had at its disposal all its experienced and peace-time trained airmen.

What then was the chief reason for our success? It was the much-maligned virtue of our individualism. In a fight in which a fraction of a second may be decisive, where everything depends upon who takes the initiative, whose brain, or rather intuition, acts more quickly the Germans were at a loss. Why? Because particularism has always taught the German to think of himself, but not for himself. Self-centredness is the result, just as individualism develops the virtue of self-reliance. Moreover, the Nazi aim is to make everyone like everybody else. If the robot and not the free, independent individual with a mind and a will of his own, is the ideal, intuition is stifled, and ultimately destroyed altogether.

I saw and spoke to some of the captured German airmen. Pleasant though some of them were, they seemed like beings from a different planet. Their minds wore blinkers, their standard of general intelligence was so low that it seemed to me—having known young Germans only a few years previously—both incredible

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and terrifying. They even seemed to move and speak with the uniformity of robots.

None of the few decisive moments in a man's life, be he a poet, a general commanding an army, or an airman, depend upon the theoretical prescriptions with which his education has fitted him out. They depend upon the unfathomable inner reactions that will suddenly impel him towards the right course of action. Call these inner monitors a stout heart, a quick brain, an instinct or a psychic gift—it will always be something that can spring alone from individualism. A system that glorifies regimentation is bound to kill it. Thousands of German airmen have had to pay the supreme price for this commandment in their Führer's gospel.

It is perhaps opportune to recall that not for the first time in history has regimentation proved its fallibility. It was Pericles who in his famous funeral oration compared the less theoretical ways of the civilized nation with the hard and fast rules of that less civilized. 'If, then,' he said, 'by taking our ease rather than by laborious training and depending upon a courage which springs more from manner of life than compulsion laws, we are ready to meet dangers, the gain is all ours, in that we do not borrow trouble by anticipating miseries which are not yet at hand, and when we come to the test we show ourselves fully as brave as those who are always toiling.'¹

¹ Thucydides.

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5

Though character rather than intellect is the main-spring of civilization, there can be no civilization without wisdom. Without it a civilization turns effete and sentimental.

The Germans have always identified wisdom with intellectuality. In no other country is the word *Intellektualismus* so common as it is there. The brain, the material, analytical instrument is what they admire most, even if it works independently of heart and intuition. They believe that every problem and every situation can be solved by the brain, by means of theories worked out to the last degree. That life in its vital many-sidedness has a knack of upsetting even the best conceived plans rarely occurs to them. If the plans prove wrong, they will set about to evolve new ones. They seem unaware of the fact that a plan can never provide more than the general directions for action. What is it then that in the end must grapple with problems unexpectedly thrown up by life? Character, and a wisdom rooted in intuition.

Only so self-tormented a soul as the German could have produced the paradoxical existence side by side of an intense *Intellektualismus*, a strong emotionalism and a nebulous mysticism. We understand the paradox more easily when we consider Germany's geographical position, and realize that not geographically alone is she

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situated between the Western world of classical heritage and Christian morality on the one side and the Russian East with its mystical longings on the other. For a nation who has not yet found herself no situation could have been more fraught with danger.

Goethe, more than the majority of Germans, was conscious of these dangers. Being a pagan *par excellence*, he did not attempt to find a solution in Christianity. Instead he hankered all his life after the serenity of the Greek ideal. This ideal, and its sentimentalized form in the common German *Schwärmerei* for Italy, inspired his country for a long time. In the clearer responses, the brighter colours, the more radiant skies and the simpler ways of the Mediterranean civilization—in Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Capri—countless Germans dreamt of finding the salvation of their aching souls.

But another class of Germans despised the 'sensuous fulfilment' in the South, Goethe's 'classical Sybaritism' and the entire romantic *Italiensehnsucht*. To them inspiration and the promise of salvation came from the Russian ideal, with its emphasis on introspection and on the mystical waters of sorrow.

In no other country were there more translations of Russian books, or was Russian literature more firmly established even among the common people than in Germany during the last fifty years. But it was not the wit of Gogol, Pushkin's lyrical beauties, the 'un-

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Russian' serenity of Turgenev's scenes, which had the greatest appeal. Tolstoi's self-searchings, Gorki's tenebrous dinginess and, above all, Dostoevski's ever-doubting mystics, were the Russian fare which the Germans gulped down most readily. I think it is true to say that not only in Germany as a whole but in each individual German there was the inner conflict between the ideals of classical serenity and the abstruse Russian mysticism. In the background of the conflict there always rolled the thunder from Valhalla. Faust was always bargaining to sell his soul to Mephisto, or had just sold it. And Siegfried's eternal sword and death were thrilling the craving soul. No unity could be forged out of such contradictory longings, and the conflict remained unsolved.

Had that conflict been based on strong Christian beliefs a solution might have been found, and Faust might have done better than to produce a mere romantic boy whose waxen wings were melted by the rays of reality. But it was not. And the conflict resulted in a spiritual (as opposed to intellectual) confusion in the make-up of many Germans. In consequence you were never certain what a German's reactions would be, and he would seldom fail to make you feel slightly uncomfortable. Scratch the Russian and you find the barbarian. Scratch the German, and there is no telling what you may not come across.

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6

Unlike intellectuality or mere cleverness, wisdom develops from experience purified in the waters of morality. It cannot be gained by one-sided methods. Its food is variety, complexity, and, last but not least, adventure and exploration. But it must be adventure for its own sake at least as much as for that of knowledge.

Uniformity of outlook and the curbing of individualism are the enemies of adventure. In Germany, if adventure there was, it usually had to be for utilitarian purposes: to serve the State, or the interests of science or industry. The Briton, on the other hand, 'travels and conquers without a settled design because he has the instinct of exploration'.¹

The Germans have brought the system of regimentation and 'unity of purpose' to perfection: education, the arts, industry, they must all submit to it. For the individual's gloriously rebelling spirit no room is left. Neither is there room for the lightheartedness that seeks peril, unconscious of its gravity, but finally surmounts it by the courage and instinct that guardian spirits bestow upon those in whose sane follies they delight. They know that in such follies lie the seeds of wisdom. And that men who live thus conquer not only the new continents of the globe but also those of their own soul.

¹ Professor George Santayana, *Soliloquies in England* (1922).

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German uniformity has created a people that, while hard working, efficient, and conscientious, has been rendered ponderous and bereft of intuition. In consequence they are lacking in most of the gifts that turn life into a glorious exploration of the worlds visible and invisible.

7

I suppose a civilization could be envisaged, built up on the German principles of national exclusiveness, blind obedience, and uniformity. There have existed highly advanced civilizations based neither on the Christian nor the Classical principle. But when we speak of civilization in this age and in this Western world, we mean a civilization which at its best is inconceivable without its Christian and Classical tenets, and, at its worst, merely illustrates lapses into an un-Christian attitude of mind or way of living.

Most of the basic truths of Christianity are common to all the great religions, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism. In Christianity they have been focalized more clearly and in a form most suitable to the white man. Nevertheless a war for Christian civilization, as we fight it to-day, automatically becomes one for the essential ethical truths in all the great religions. By fighting against our standards of truth and humanity, Germany is waging war against those standards in all the other great religions as well.

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To accept those religions is to accept the premise that their masters and prophets were divinely inspired and that they revealed God's will to us. In their divine origin, if in nothing else, is the root of the identity of most of the important tenets of those creeds. The religion that Germany represents, whether as expressed by the Goths or by Fichte or by Hitler, is neither one of divine inspiration nor of principles that are in any way identical with those of the great religions.

Despite their historical and other differences, our civilization and those inspired by the other great religions are like sisters, born of the same father. The religion of the Germans belongs to a different clan altogether, one which we all, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus, cannot help regarding as evil.

So we can no longer split hairs about the right of each nation to evolve the civilization that suits it best. Whatever a country's culture or politics, in most countries of to-day only one form is known and accepted as civilization. Everything that stands for decency and progress and individual happiness is nourished by sources as yet little tapped in Germany. And to-day she is doing her utmost to destroy those sources.

Chapter 8

DEUTSCHLAND'S MISSION

I

German history over several centuries teaches us that those of her leaders who were the most exalted were those who appealed to the identical instincts and ambitions that Hitler is using with such dexterity. What to-day is called *Lebensraum* used to be known as *Deutsches Recht*, or pan-Germanism or *Unser Platz in der Sonne*.¹ Her former leaders, being better educated and more versed in diplomatic subtleties, disguised their schemes with greater cunning. Besides, whereas they represented merely preparatory stages of German aspirations, Hitler is the spokesman of the culminating stage. But Frederick the Great marched into his wars of aggression under just as puerile pretences and falsifications as did Bismarck, who forged telegrams in order to force Emperor William I into war. William II's 'scrap of paper' hardly needs mention. Hitler enter-

¹ Our place in the Sun.

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ing into Czechoslovakia in 1938, a year later into Poland, and soon afterwards into half a dozen other countries, adopted the very same technique. But, then, was it not always a postulate of the German philosophy of action that nothing is a crime that glorifies the Vaterland?

No matter how much individual Germans may have disapproved of Hitler's methods within their own country, they all acclaimed his foreign conquests, especially if these could be achieved without too much sacrifice on their own part. The mind of the German majority was completely unperturbed by the petty consideration that these conquests could not be justified by any principle of truth or morality. What they demand of a leader is that he should confirm their belief in their right to the 'place in the sun', in fact to become, as Hitler himself calls it, 'a supreme master-race supported by the means and resources of the entire world'. The leader whom they acclaim most fervently is he who appears to them as the conqueror and, therefore, the 'Saviour' of the world.

2

Was it not William II who under the aegis of Germany was to unite the Western world against the 'Yellow Peril' spreading from Japan? Did he not even personally paint a fantastic picture in which that peril was graphically illustrated? And was it not a source of grave

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disappointment both to him and his people that the foolish world in its blindness refused to recognize his wisdom and to accept his counsel?

Hitler's efforts to play the part of the protector of European civilization against the Bolshevist menace have a familiar ring in German history. And the enthusiasm of the masses for such prophetic leadership is nothing new in Germany.

How well I remember as a child seeing William II enter Danzig on a state visit. In the white uniform of a *Kürassier*, with the huge shimmering eagle on his Lohengrin helmet, and mounted on a snow-white charger, he was followed by his six sons on horseback. White-clad maidens were strewing basketfuls of flowers before him, and the crowd was delirious with joy. Women and men threw flowers with one hand, and, wiping away their tears with the other, declared that this was the greatest moment in their lives. Now they could die in peace. '*Unser geliebtes Vaterland ist in starker Hand.*'¹ And Lohengrin of the strong hand rode with a demeanour as if straight to heaven.

3

We seem to have witnessed identical scenes across the Rhine within the last few years. Though there may have been a less liberal distribution of flowers, but more delirium and more tears, all the appurtenances of

¹ 'Our beloved Fatherland is in strong hands.'

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complete self-abandon to the chosen man were identical.

The mouthpiece of Germany's true aspirations is never a Lassalle, a Stresemann, a Rathenau, a Brüning. We find those aspirations expressed far more faithfully by a Dr. Frank, Governor of 'German' Poland in our own times. In a speech broadcast from Cracow, Poland's most ancient centre of religion and learning, he told the world that 'the greatest gift which Almighty God has given man is to be a German'. And with the words, 'We are proud to master the world', he expresses the views not of the Nazi Party but of the German people. And when Dr. Frank concludes his oration with the words, 'Adolf Hitler is called upon to be the leader of the world',¹ he merely repeats what the Germans said or would have loved to say of Barbarossa and Bismarck and William II.

4

By stating that Hitler is not an exception in German history we state only half the truth. The full truth is that very few Germans are exceptions. And it is one of the tragedies of their spiritual make-up that the exceptions never become effective to transform the nation.

The other tragedy is that, even the exceptional German, the man who possesses all the virtues that we admire most, ceases to be an exception as soon as he

¹ Quoted in *The Times*, 24th December 1940

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remembers that he is also a German. Your Jack Brown remains exactly the same person whether you address him as Jack Brown or as a citizen of the British Empire—except that this last form of address will make him feel a fool. Wilhelm Schulze, on the other hand, no matter how civilized a man he may be, becomes transformed the moment he is allowed to think of himself as a member of the great German unity. The ‘mystical’ undercurrents which have been dormant in his soul suddenly assert themselves. Whatever was individual in him is swept aside by the gushing waters of his *Deutschtum*, and he becomes very much like his far less-civilized neighbour Müller.

When we think of Germany in terms of history or politics, it would be fatal to conjure up the picture of one of our nice and ‘civilized’ personal friends across the Rhine. For within the framework of *Deutschtum* that picture simply does not exist.

The belief in the superiority of everything German, and, especially, of that wonderful propaganda article for foreign export, *Kultur*, is shared by every German, however intelligent. The Nazis may be more blatant and more crude in their assertions of that belief but the difference is merely one of quantity.

It was not in the days of Nazism that the poet Hoffmann von Fallersleben wrote the text of the German National Anthem, and that the Germans became the only people who proclaim in their anthem that they are

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superior to every other nation. They repeat that assertion in the ever-recurring refrain, 'Deutschland über Alles in der Welt'. And not content with proclaiming their general superiority, they set out with traditional thoroughness to describe it in detail. Thus we find that not merely Deutschland but also German women and German loyalty and wine and song and honour and virtue are superior to those of any other nation. In fact, everything German is 'über Alles in der Welt'.

Is it then surprising if the German regards himself as a crusading missionary? His sacred duty is to enrich and save the world. Not only his princes, political leaders, bards, and demagogues have confirmed this belief: even his noblest intellectual leaders have done it. Fichte himself preached, in his famous lectures 'To the German Nation', that 'Prussia must liberate Germany, but Germany must liberate the world'.

It is this eternal obsession with the liberation and salvation of the world, this *Ur-prinzip* (primeval principle) of German faith, that has made German cultural and even scientific penetration so dangerous. Had there been none of this crusading ardour we might have laughed at the pomposity of the German professors and the braggadocio of German propaganda. But the Nazi doctrine of Germany as the only *Herrenvolk*, the destruction of Dutch, Polish, and Czech culture and places of learning, unnecessary for people who can never aspire to be a *Herrenvolk*, all these are merely up-

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to-date versions of the self-same belief in Germany's messianic mission. Individual Germans may disagree as to the methods by which that mission can be accomplished, but never as to the fact of its existence. It begins with salvation, and imperceptibly changes into domination. For the last ten years millions of Germans have been marching up and down their country singing with religious fervour, 'Heute gehört uns Deutschland, morgen die ganze Welt' ('To-day we own Germany, to-morrow the entire world').

5

If even in the good old 'democratic' days you spoke to a German scientist, he might disapprove of German politicians, but he soon made you realize that only German science counted; the merchant would tell you that only the Germans were efficient in business; the musician that the only music worth listening to was German; the railway conductor that German trains were the only ones that arrived on time; and the spokesmen of the German theatre or town-planning would suffer no contradiction to his claims that in his particular sphere Germany was paramount. Only the German conception of history or philosophy or how to make cheap suitcases or how to run a bank was really sound. Condescendingly your German crusader might admit that Constable was a gifted painter and Verdi a tuneful composer and Montaigne not a bad philosopher. But under

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no conditions would he grant you that there might exist a non-German and yet equally true sense of values according to which Constable, Verdi, and Montaigne might be as eminent as their counterparts in Germany. Why, Shakespeare himself was far better in the translation by Tieck and Schlegel than in the original, and it needed the popularity of that translation to throw back to England a recognition of his eminence!

The German mind is unwilling or unable to acknowledge that within its own sphere the British genius for improvisation, the lazy English nonchalance may be as useful as is the German mania for theorizing and planning in advance; that our sense of humour may be of as much value as German 'seriousness'; that the lucidity of French philosophers denotes as sound a system of intellectual speculation as does the ponderousness of their German colleagues; that the ambiguity and flexibility of English law has just as much in its favour as the rigid finality of the *Strafgesetzbuch*.

Even where truly liberal ideas of a universal nature are advocated, they are reinforced by the conviction of German superiority. In a book that, many years before the more modern theories of Federal Union, expounded the same scheme, the condition is made that 'such a Union must be centred in Germany. For Germany is the natural centre for all training and education for aims of a non-national but universal character'.¹ It is always the

¹ Konstantin Frantz, *Die Religion des Nationalliberalismus*.

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same: culture, happiness, brotherhood for all; but of course only under the tutelage of Germany, the only country fit to deliver the goods.

But then, according to the German crusader, 'all the countries of the Occident and their creative values have been produced by the *Germanen*', and 'the entire culture of the West would disappear if the German blood were to disappear from Europe'.¹ It is not for him to adopt a different attitude of mind. He is a crusader setting out to save the world through *deutsches Wesen* and *deutsche Kultur*. Even if he wished to do so, he could not possibly accept the idea that any other *Wesen* or *Kultur* might be blessed by the same mystic grace. He will copy your ways and methods where he thinks that these will benefit him; but he will not accept them on terms of equality.

Most nations fondly imagine that in one respect or another they are superior to all others. This belief is inherent in the very nature of man. It corresponds to his weakness for regarding himself as the centre of the universe, however small his particular universe may be. But, with the exception of Germany, no nation makes of such a belief a crusading principle.

The French *knew* that in culture and the art of living they served as an example to the rest of the world. We in this country knew equally well that others could learn from us in the technique of politics, in sport, in naval

¹ Rosenberg, p. 81.

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matters, or in finance. But even in our innermost hearts we never claimed that we were leading in music or the art of cooking; just as the French did not consider themselves superior in spheres which they knew not to be their own.

Since the German *Wesen* was held to be superior in every respect, the German mission simply had to embrace every aspect of foreign life. The German acknowledged your superiority only in spheres that he himself did not take seriously. Well, yes, English tailors and French dressmakers and Austrian pastrycooks might be better than those in Germany. But that was about all that he would concede you.

It is this messianic conviction of German superiority in every sphere which distinguishes German nationalism from that of other countries.

Probably only the ancient Jews shared a similar belief in their exceptional mission. And both they and the Germans have succeeded in antagonizing the rest of the world. But whereas the Jews have outgrown that belief and have often succeeded in assimilating themselves on equal terms within their surroundings, the Germans have only just reached its pinnacle.

Just before and at the beginning of the present war I employed as a gardener a German refugee from Nazi persecution. He hated the Nazis and was praying for the day when he might take revenge on them. Yet when at the beginning of the war Germany overran Poland he

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could not conceal his joy. Though he was sorry that it should have been the Nazis who achieved the conquest, he was delighted that at last Germany would bring *Kultur* and organization to that 'disorderly' country. Even his own suffering had not stifled the missionary spirit that a thousand years of German *Kultur* had infused into his blood.

6

And now let us see what the wisest of all the Germans and her greatest genius, has to say about *Kultur*—that sacred German grail which will save the world. This is how Goethe describes it: 'A few centuries may yet have to pass before there will be sufficient spiritual accomplishment and culture among the Germans to enable one to say that it is a long time since they were Barbarians.'¹

7

It is in the extravagance of his belief in the superiority of the *Vaterland* that the German reveals most crudely how untouched he has remained by Greek and Roman culture and how deep the gulf is between his culture and his civilization. For while in the works of German poets such as Goethe, Hölderlin, and Stefan George we often find a comprehension of the classical spirit and a classical beauty of form that are second to

¹ J. P. Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, vol. ii, p. 118.

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none, the soul of the nation has remained practically untouched by those influences.

A sense of proportion and of the 'golden mean' is among the noblest gifts bestowed upon the Western world by the Classics. No nation is more lacking in that gift than the German. A sense of balance and proportion may have been the dream of those Germans who sought fulfilment on the Mediterranean shore, but it remained anathema to the nation at large. Hence their exaggerated attitude both in happiness and in sorrow. 'Himmelhoch jauchzend, zu Tode betrübt,'¹ is how Goethe described that absence of balance. The lack of vital moral principles is responsible for it.

The Briton may often appear to be agnostic and to transgress against the Christian principle, but he is too deeply imbued with it to forget it altogether. He has a strong intuitive notion of what is right and what wrong, what is fair play and what isn't, what constitutes decency and what caddishness, and this will always serve him as his final yardstick. He may be unconscious that the force by which he is guided springs from his Christian beliefs, but he will nevertheless accept its promptings and act as if he were a believing Christian.

The German does not possess that inner guidance. When he feels strong there are no limits to his ambitions; but when he is down he finds nothing to fall back upon but self-pity and gloom. I have no correct statis-

¹ Rejoicing unto heaven, depressed unto death.

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tics at hand, but nowhere have the figures for suicides been so high as in Germany both before and since the advent of the Nazis.

Once the German's beliefs and ambitions have led him astray, he will turn round with violent despair and decry his former gods. A revealing illustration of this could be observed in the state of mind prevalent under the Weimar Republic after 1919. Since the nation's former idols had disclosed their feet of clay, there was nothing about them that was considered good. The former ideals of patriotism, of honour—as understood by the ruling classes; of morality—as accepted before 1914; of discipline and uniformity; of physical courage—all these were held in contempt. Patriotism was decried as the outlived doctrine of reactionaries, and replaced by a servile aping of everything foreign, especially British and American; physical courage was the prerogative of bullies and half-wits; former discipline and uniformity gave place to a rampant individualism that was nothing so much as licence run amok; honour was a fiction of brainless officers and university fraternities; sex morality—an old-fashioned prejudice.

When Hitler gained power, he made the pendulum swing back to the other extreme. Honour, usually, in its most childish form, became an article of faith; physical courage was extolled as a virtue higher than saintliness; and morality became a code imposed with a ruthless disregard for reality and therefore with doubtful suc-

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cess. But once again the national mania for extremes had found expression.

8

Neither the lack of a valid morality nor the Pan-German dreams would ever have been so much emphasized if the Classical or the Christian spirit had been allowed to imbue the Germans with a stronger respect for truth. But morality, truth, and Christianity go hand in hand. Both Christian and classical philosophy provide us with values that are absolute and not merely acceptable under certain conditions. Having been confirmed by experience, these values have been accepted by practically the whole civilized world and have become our canons of truth. Thanks to them we no longer argue whether virtue is better than vice, truth better than a lie.

Had the German people shared this respect for the sanctity of truth, lies could never have become so essential a part of the Nazi system. The Nazis think and admit that a distortion of truth, whether in politics, education, or personal intercourse, is permissible so long as it serves the interests of the Vaterland and of the Nazi State. Truth as understood by other nations has been decried by them as 'the sentimentality of decadent races'. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler discusses without compunction the best methods for deceiving his own and other countries by lies on a grand scale.

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In a country in which the belief of German superiority has perforce destroyed all appreciation of facts, the identification with the Nazi attitude towards truth has not been a sudden misalliance but the final consummation of something that has always existed.

In nearly every German two standards of truth seem to exist side by side: the one applicable to him personally, the other to Germany as a whole. In his private dealings he may be the most truthful of men; he may be inspired by an ardent thirst for knowledge; he may try as genuinely as anyone else to adhere to the principles that he derives from philosophy; and he may be meticulous and logical in his own thought. Confront him with problems of *Deutschum*, however, and his impressive armoury of truth will prove as ineffective as though it had never existed.

But then even in his intellectual attitude to Germany he would rather be influenced by fire-eating mountebanks than dispassionate thinkers, by political leaders than poets and philosophers. The man whose views about the world at large might be based on Aristotle, Plato, or Kant, in his views on Germany will easily follow any demagogue or princeling. Within the sphere of *Deutschum* he would rather invoke Treitschke than Goethe, and Bismarck and Hitler than Schopenhauer or Einstein.

Thus it was in reality the 'cultured truth-loving' German who was more dangerous as a crusader than the

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blunt uneducated Nazi. For by his 'truthfulness' and his intellectual integrity he lulled us into a false sense of security and into assuming that his political views were inspired by the same enlightened spirit as his intellectual ones. This gave so pernicious a power to German cultural and scientific penetration abroad.

It was not surprising that, once the present war had started, members of the 'enlightened' spheres fell in most easily with German Fifth Column activities. Referring to these activities, the President of the Norwegian Parliament says, 'It is not the crook who is the real danger; it is the kindly, industrious, trustworthy businessman, the professor, mechanic, gone nationally insane.'¹

9

Hitler himself has brought the German habit of equivocation to its present pitch. His own lies and promises, revoked as soon as it suited him, are too fresh in everyone's memory to need repeating. But we must first ask ourselves whether a man convinced of his own divinity is at all capable of telling the truth. Moreover, Hitler's entire mental make-up cannot be judged by ordinary standards.

Being master of himself only as Adolf Schicklgruber, otherwise, however, chiefly a tool in the hands of powers

¹ Carl J. Hambro, *I Saw It Happen in Norway* (Hodder and Stoughton).

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that he himself does not know, he can only be held partly responsible for his lies. It is not so much he who tells the lies as that which speaks through him. Impartial evidence confirms that, whenever he makes a promise, he is sincerely convinced of what he says and determined to keep his word. Yet he forgets it as soon as conditions impose upon him a new way of action. He himself does not see the new situation in terms of reason or remembrance of things past, but merely in terms of the 'voices' whose instrument he is.

The little personal ego of Adolf Schicklgruber is outraged when he is accused of having broken his word, for he is hardly conscious of ever having given it. If it is proved to him black on white that he did so, he is just as sincere in his conviction that he meant whatever he may have said quite differently. He can view his earlier promise from no other point of view than from that of the most recent 'voices'. The former situation, justifying his earlier promise, belongs to so remote a state of his consciousness that he can hardly relate it to the present moment.

This attitude is typical of all mediums. They may have an uncanny memory for things stated in normal consciousness; but what they have seen or heard when they were 'possessed' sinks into oblivion.

And it is significant that while Hitler has probably told more lies and broken his word more frequently than any public character in history, Adolf Schickl-

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gruber is supposed never to break his word when purely personal matters are concerned, unconnected in any way with politics or with anything concerning Adolf Hitler.

This psycho-pathic state, however, need not deter him from deliberately adopting falsehood as an accepted method of State policy. The ways through which evil uses him as its instrument are not always clear-cut and simple.

It is undoubtedly Hitler's pathological condition in regard to truth that is responsible for the essential deformity of even those of his accomplishments that seem to have been inspired by some better instinct. If we look into them carefully, we soon discover that in reality they are never what they are supposed to be. The solving of the unemployment problem is only one such example.¹

Hitler will state under every possible oath that for humane reasons he refused for several months to allow his Air Force to bomb England by night. When we look into this statement we discover that there is not a word of truth in it, and that his humanitarian impulse was dictated solely by the unpreparedness of his *Luftwaffe* to take action by night and by the time required for the necessary training. After the destruction of Rotterdam, due to his own orders, he declared, 'Wir haben das nicht gewollt.'²

¹ Dealt with in Chapter 9. ² 'We didn't want this to happen.'

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If he does things which in themselves are right, he will have done them for the wrong reasons or in a form that is wrong.

He has attempted to eliminate economic frontiers and to do away with class distinctions—both admirable efforts that we ourselves should long ago have made. Yet why did he adopt the elimination of economic frontiers? Because it was the only method whereby he could replenish his own larder. And he did it against the will of the people concerned and in a manner that was advantageous to Germany and to her alone. But he himself was convinced that it was a beneficial deed of historical significance (which indeed it might have been), and remained unconscious of the privation and suffering it meant to other countries.

The elimination of class distinctions would have been an achievement of major importance if it had been genuine. In actual fact, it meant the degradation of people who by upbringing and knowledge might have been entitled to an elevated position and the simultaneous creation of a new privileged class whose only patent for their rise was their position in the Party that had the power to elevate them. And the privileges the 'top' men in the Nazi Party enjoy, the luxury of their feasts, and the pomp and circumstance with which they are surrounded put everything known to the formerly privileged classes quite in the shade. It is always the

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same: a fundamental distortion of truth and deformity of the achievement.

IO

Owing to his abnormal circumstances Hitler himself may in his own queer way be regarded as untypical of the prevailing German attitude towards truth. This, however, does not apply to his colleagues. These are naturally conscious of the incredible *volte-face* of their master. Some of the less perverted among them would probably have revolted long ago against such duplicity had they not regarded it as permissible.

Let us remember that not all of those who condone his lies by assisting him in his schemes are Nazis dyed in the wool. 'Except for Göring, Göbbels and Frick, Hitler's Ministers are not Nazi politicians but professional experts,'¹ in fact, men who have held office before he came to power and are members of families that we in this country have for so long regarded as guarantees of the respectability and trustworthiness of German intentions. Count Schwerin von Krosigk, Baron von Neurath, Baron von Eltz-Rübenach, Dr. Schacht, Dr. Meiszner, are only a few of them. Practically all the diplomatic representatives who execute Hitler's orders belong to the same class. The Ribbentrops and Abetz's are the exception. More typical of

¹ N. A. Pichler, *History of Germany* (Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Son, 1939), Part IV.

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Nazi diplomacy are the bearers of the oldest and noblest names in the land, Schulenburg and Bismarck, Mackensen and Bülow, Bieberstein and Killinger, Hassel and Putlitz, all counts and princes and barons, in short the *crème de la crème*. In Russia the bearers of similar names preferred to let themselves be killed or to live the miserable existence of refugees, taxi-drivers, waiters, and so forth.

Would not at any rate a few of these blue-blooded bearers of titles hundreds of years old have refrained from assisting in the establishment of an order so flagrantly based on lies, if their original standards of truth had been different? And after the war is over will they not be the first to seek the drawing-rooms of Park Lane and the waiting-rooms of Whitehall, to assure us that they 'didn't really mean it'?

The Nazis themselves had at least the courage of their convictions and before 1933 refused to compromise with a régime they disapproved of.

II

In behaving as they have done, all these representatives of that 'respectable' Germany have nevertheless rendered us a service. For they must have shattered the last illusions of even those who fondly imagined that that nicer, democratic Germany was a reality; optimists who dreamt that once the present nightmare rulers of Germany disappeared, the reality of the ancient

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régime in its various guises would reassert itself and render all our future problems nice and easy. So that once again we should all become charitable and kindly and start building castles in the air if as nothing had happened.

Part Three

THE ISSUES AT STAKE

‘The British nation can be counted upon to carry through to victory any struggle that it once enters upon, no matter how long such a struggle may last, or however great the sacrifice that may be necessary.’
ADOLF HITLER, *Mein Kampf*.

Chapter 9

WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?



. I

After a year's absence from London I arrived there only towards the end of 1940. The London I had heard so much about during the fateful autumn months was the London of wounds, of much suffering and silent heroism, of subdued grumbling and great deeds. London's new social life and the London of war discussions was completely unknown to me.

Then one evening I was asked to a dinner party. Most of those present were men in fairly important positions, both uniformed and civilian. One man, with many ribbons and what sounded an important Staff job, said something about the difficulties that would confront us at the signing of peace. In reply I ventured to suggest that, difficult though the task would be, it should, in some respects, prove easier than in 1919. The beribboned man (he referred to every eminent

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man in the land by his Christian name) raised his eyebrows.

'After all,' I tried to explain, 'the whole issue is so much clearer. We know what we are fighting for; not perhaps to make "the world safe for democracy", but to enable Christian civilization to survive, and this time the country is imbued with a real idealism.'

His eyebrows rose even higher. Though he evidently regarded me as a simpleton just back from the wilds of the jungle or the desert, he nevertheless condescended to open a corner of his mind for my benefit.

'My dear man,' he said, 'we are fighting this war for exactly the same reasons as we did in the last war—to preserve our Empire, to keep the European balance of power, and to save ourselves. There is just as much idealism on the German side as there is on ours—probably very little, but all the stuff about Christian civilization and the rest is eyewash; of course the newspapers talk about it a lot, and a damn good thing they do—but that's all.' The accent of finality on the last three words made me give up all idea of arguing, and when one or two other members of the party mildly conveyed that they agreed with their friend, I hastened to drop the subject.

But I must admit that had the martial fellow knocked me on the head, my surprise could not have been greater. It had seemed to me all along that everyone in this country must know what we are fighting for now,

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and that the essential difference between this and the last war stood out as clearly as did that between the strategy of 1914 and that of 1941.

As for the difference between the two idealisms, people in this country may not be able to express their beliefs in words; when Britons feel most deeply they are often at their worst in expressing themselves. But I thought there could be no doubt as to the genuineness and force of those beliefs. My fellow guest's point of view was a revelation to me, and I only got over my shock when I remembered that I had, perhaps, been absent too long from normal life to know what 'ordinary' people thought.

It is perhaps opportune, therefore, to examine the problem of the relationship between the two countries, and see what is at stake and in what respect our aims in this war differ from those of the Germans.

2

We recognize by now that it is not a matter of chance or due merely to Nazism that it should be Germany of all nations who has adopted the principle of 'racialism' and purity of blood. Neither is it a matter of chance that her chief foe in this war should be Britain. In no other country have ideas of 'racialism' been met with greater derision. It would be strange if it had been otherwise, for in no other great European country do we find a

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more varied mixture of blood. Romans, Angles, Danes, Britons, Picts, Scots, Saxons, and Normans mingled their blood on battlefields, as well as in wedlock, and, later on, added to it Jewish, French, and German blood, making this nation what it is. Would Christianity have become so much more of a reality here than it is in many other countries if it had not been for a blood that in its infinite variety confirms the principles of equality and brotherhood?

Though the ways in which history shapes a nation may seem haphazard and independent of the deeper tendencies that inspire that nation there is a very close link between the two. A nation produces a history, exists under external conditions, and evolves types, all of which are required by the forces that guide it and correspond to its most profound spiritual needs. In the words of Saint Paul, 'God has determined the times before appointed and the bounds of the nations' habitations' (Acts xvii. 26).

It was inevitable that Britain should be the present adversary of Germany. Here the forces most definitely opposed to the spirit guiding Germany are more clearly focalized in daily life than in any other great European country. Though we have an abhorrence of speaking of our own achievements, it may be necessary at a moment like this to remind ourselves that even foreigners hold, and have held, the belief that England is the country 'still wise to entertain and swift to execute the policy

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which the mind and the heart of mankind require'.¹ Perhaps you need to have been born abroad to appreciate fully what Britain stands for, and to realize, by comparison, how much more here than elsewhere the Christian principle is a living fact.

Let us cast a brief glance at just a few of the possessions that make of us Germany's predestined enemy.

The freedom of thought in our approach to most of the important manifestations of life probably heads our list. It applies to public affairs, religion, science, literature, business, even to the arts. What that freedom, however much misused or voluntarily sacrificed for the sake of vested interests, signifies, we realize when we consider its opposite in countries ruled by dictators.

Our legal system, though it may cry out for reform, is unaffected by the political tendencies of the moment, by the interests of the Church, business, parties, trade unions, or the armed services. Great Britain was the first country to banish torture from its penal code. Nowhere has the respect for individual human life been greater.

In few countries has the genius for gradual emancipation been more developed than here. And organic reformation from within, slow though it may appear to be, has always been an indication of a high civilization. Violent outbursts are signs of disease, and usually denote either a very young or a very sick body. More is

¹ R. W. Emerson (1856).

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destroyed by them than can be recreated for generations to come.

In this country changes have mostly developed organically from the conditions of the moment and the traditions of the past, but it would be wrong to say, as it is so often said, that such traditions were those of the privileged classes alone, or of people afraid of reform. They were common to the nation at large, and to modes of living which cannot be revolutionized overnight without seriously injuring the whole national fabric. The changes that other countries, notably Germany, have effected during recent years have been little else than changes without hope.

We, no doubt, fall short of our ideals of freedom, justice, collaboration, tolerance, fair-play, but at any rate we do not regard them as alien to our nature, nor do we let them become mere abstractions; they are theoretically accepted by all and striven for by many.

Then there is the common honesty, the reality of which we appreciate only if we compare it with its absence in so many other countries; the respect for one's neighbour's views and the privacy of his life; the natural kindness that makes every foreigner who comes to live here feel as if he had been transplanted into a less selfish, less brutal, in fact, a more benign world. There is the sensitiveness and compassion for suffering which by some may be called sentimentality, yet which make for a happier life than do their opposites. And then

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there is the profound sense of social justice, a justice that countless citizens regard as their natural birthright.

3

Because the process of our evolution has been so natural and gradual, many of us fail to appreciate its qualities, taking them for granted. Revolution is always more spectacular than evolution, but its fruits have a way of losing their flavour even before they are ripe. When they have withered altogether, the only way to make the tree bear new fruit is by stimulating the growth through the shock of yet another revolution.

Through having grown organically and from deep roots, the gains of our striving for a better life are more stable, and carry the life sap for the future. Gains resulting from violent upheavals are born in agony and at tremendous sacrifice. Yet when they prove of doubtful worth they are discarded as if no price whatever had been paid for them.

Looking back, we discover that our achievements are not due to chance, not a superstructure without foundations, but inherent in our nature, and in whatever qualities the nation may have developed through long strivings. Already our ancestors carried within them the seeds of their future soundness.

'It is a strange thing—due to inheritance, to the country itself, its liberal Constitution, its sound education . . . anyhow, the English seem to have an advan-

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tage over most others . . . ' (a foreigner said of those ancestors in 1828). 'In their whole demeanour and behaviour there is such ease, such self-assurance. . . . They have the courage to be what Nature meant them to be. There is nothing distorted or deformed about them, nothing half, nothing crooked.'¹

We may feel uncomfortable at such praise, but since it comes from no less than Goethe himself we can accept with good grace a description which may serve to show us more clearly the value, even permanence, of the possessions that are at stake to-day.

Those of us who point to the deficiencies in our democratic way of life, and speak of the failure of democracy, should remember that the rule of the masses must at first inevitably mean the rule of mediocrity. It takes time to make sound use of new rights. In the history of a social creed a few generations are a mere nothing. So, while contrasting the shortcomings of democracy with its achievements, let us remind ourselves that we are living only at the very beginning of the democratic era.²

4

The alliances of other countries in this war, though certainly not accidental, are only incidental. Britain (with

¹ Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*.

² The principles of a true democratic franchise were introduced into this country only with the 1918 Act. The limitations as to age and property were not abandoned until 1928.

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the United States of America) and Germany alone are the symbols of the opposing forces which, both in the visible and the invisible spheres, are fighting for supremacy.

How, then, was it possible that we in Britain could have deluded ourselves for so long that the Germans were 'our cousins' and were well disposed towards us?

The Germans' hatred was always directed towards the British. They regarded themselves—and quite rightly—as the most hard-working, most efficient people, devoted to culture and education, and by their diligence meriting—in their own opinion, at any rate—to be the first citizens of the world and masters of the greatest empire. The country that stood in the way of their 'place in the sun' was Great Britain. But the British were lazy, hopeless at organization, indifferent to all the deeper issues of life, addicts to drink and to childish ball games. Yet they were the owners of the greatest empire the world has ever known, supremely self-possessed and indifferent to other people. While lacking in all desire to learn from others, while arrogant and self-satisfied, they were yet in their whole bearing admittedly superior to everyone else, the Germans themselves included. This disparity between apparent cause and effect was unnatural, it was exasperating.

The Germans would have been almost super-human if they had not hated the nation which not only obstructed their path, but had the damnable knack of

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making them feel both jealous and inferior. They did all they could to become like the British. They learnt English, sent their sons to Oxford and Cambridge, and made them buy their clothes in Savile Row; they read all the latest English books, played tennis and golf, and even began to carry umbrellas, hoping that from this wealth of detail the secret of the English gentleman's superiority would finally emerge.

The one thing to which they always remained blind was that the Englishman's 'superior' bearing depended neither upon Savile Row, umbrellas, nor even games. That though tradition, custom, and environment had helped him to become what he is, it was essentially his character which was responsible—his intuition, his genius for the imponderable things of life, and, therefore, for compromise; his sense of humour, which never allowed him to take himself and his difficulties too seriously; his aversion to making complex theoretical plans before the occasion for putting them into practice arose, and so smothering the spontaneity of life and of his own reactions to it in intellectual hypotheses; and, last but not least, in his instinctive reliance upon the Christian ethos.

And so, though those nice-looking Wilhelms and Wolfgangs learned how to charm elderly, and not so elderly, ladies in Park Lane, their character, their mental rigidity, their moral outlook remained as they had been before their owners had first crossed the Channel.

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Had they guessed how essentially antagonistic their very soul was to that of the British they might have given up all hope of ever discovering the 'secret'. But they did not guess, and yet had to admit that neither they themselves, nor, under their influence, their fellow countrymen, could become like the 'British gentleman' and build a similar empire. So they drew the only logical conclusion. Since they could not succeed in setting up their own empire by adopting Britain's methods, they could only hope to do so by destroying Britain.

5

The Germans were anything but fools. They were the last people to betray their true intentions. Mediterranean people may be better at intrigue, but no-one can surpass the German at not giving himself away. Even Hitler, the least secretive among all the German conquerors, never included Britain in any of his plans revealed to the world. In reality the Sudeten Germans, Austria, Danzig, Poland, the Continent, were only milestones on the road to the conquest of Great Britain.

Duplicity is by no means a new German technique. Unfortunately, we in this country were too honest and simple and too much given to burying our heads in the sands of make-belief. We had no means whereby to recognize what was behind the Germanic veneer. Had we done so, we should have discovered long ago that, with incredible cunning, Germany had been able to

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assume at least three different disguises, each one destined for a different part of the world, and, as was proved, each one remarkably convincing.

The only direction in which Germany felt herself supreme in her strength was that of her immediate neighbour in the east—Poland. Here she need have no fear of showing her true self. Ever since the days of Frederick the Great—and even before—she had done nothing to disguise her brutalities, her intolerance and conceit. Even in the days of the ‘enlightened democratic’ Weimar Republic, her attitude towards her eastern neighbour and her Polish minorities was one of open hatred and savage persecution. But in those days she took particular care to camouflage this attitude in all her dealings with the Western world.

The mask she turned towards the west showed not a trace of the outrages and the blood with which its eastern half was besmirched. The Western world was always presented with her best manners, her artistic and scientific achievements, her flattery.

Can we be surprised that this duplicity, pursued with all the knowledge that comes from a painstaking study of foreign methods, should have been successful when we remind ourselves that Hitler’s far cruder methods, based neither on the knowledge of the foreign mind nor on diplomatic subtlety, likewise succeeded so admirably? Did we not weep at the sufferings of the unfortunate Sudeten Germans? Did not many of us clench our

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fists at the injustice that had deprived poor Germany of her beloved Danzig, and which with 'the Corridor' had cut so cruel a wound into the very flesh of the defenceless Vaterland? Were we, the Dutch, the Belgians, and the Danes not warmed by a glow of security when the Führer assured us with religious fervour that the frontiers of those countries were sacred to him? Were not the inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine lulled into cosy dreams when the brown-shirted Saviour told them that their future, within France, was assured for all time? And didn't we congratulate ourselves whenever the thin-lipped mouth under the black moustache declared that the British Empire was as much a necessity to Germany as it was to the whole of the world? The only enemies were the 'Anti-Christ' in the Kremlin, and the handful of non-Aryan 'criminals' scattered throughout the world who had tried to cling to that 'purity of blood' which the black-haired Aryan, on his Wagnerian mountain-top, had raised to a religion in his own land. Never, never, never was there to be any quarrel with the British. . . . Only with Dr. Schuschnigg, and only with Dr. Beneš, and only with the rulers of Poland, and only with the King of Norway. . . . But the list is too long. We shouted with delight in front of Downing Street when our own Prime Minister waved to us the screed of paper that assured us of 'Peace in our time'.

It is not so very long since we were duped by the assurances of even the most outspoken politician in

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German history. And what were the results of the assurances which found so ready a response in our hearts? Violated frontiers, concentration camps, destroyed cities, ravaged universities, firing squads, and starvation lines, which followed wherever the brown-shirted Moloch appeared to 'protect' and 'safeguard' the independence and historic rights of the victims.

It would not be at all out of keeping with the thoroughness with which the Germans practised their duplicity if, after the war, we hear that the British prisoners in Germany, at any rate the officers, were treated with as much flattery and kindness as their hosts were able to muster. At the back of this attitude there will always have been the unspoken insinuation, 'Now you can judge for yourselves—Are we really as bad as your propaganda made you believe? Aren't we both really very much alike?' And some of the British prisoners will no doubt have fallen into the trap. Of course they will have known nothing of the way their Polish or Serb colleagues were treated in *their* prison camps; members of nations which did not warrant the trouble of turning on the full tap of German 'charm'.

A typical example of the German duplicity of methods was offered at Christmas, 1940. The German wireless programmes for home consumption contained no Christian religious items of any kind. Christmas was celebrated on pagan lines. This was absolutely in keeping with the Government's established policy, which

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no longer allows the broadcasting of Christian services. Instead, there are programmes devoted to the new forms of 'religion' that have come into being with the Nazis. Nevertheless, the Christmas programmes broadcast to foreign countries, especially the U.S.A. and the South American republics, were full of orthodox Christian items. This, again, was absolutely in keeping with the official policy, which, in all its manifestations destined for those countries, never tires of stressing the pro-Christian character of the Nazi Government. Cardinal Hinsley affirmed this vicious duplicity when he said that 'the war against Christianity is waged by National Socialism with diabolical thoroughness and unscrupulous methods. . . . The religious persecution is camouflaged with the perfect skill of cunning deceit.'¹

Germany's third disguise was that for home consumption. It was the disguise of the powerful nation with a great *Kultur* and an even greater mission in the world.

The British saw, of course, nothing but the western mask, seldom disfigured by even a flicker of anti-British feeling.

6

Very few Britons can ever have discovered Germany's true feelings towards them. The British tourist and the British student were Germany's best customers.

¹ Broadcast on 21st January 1941.

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They brought with them their higher standards of living, and thus were inordinately generous without realizing it. They seldom remained long enough to speak the language like natives, and thus to be accepted with that unguarded frankness which alone could reveal the face behind the flattering mask. The few who did succeed in getting a glimpse of it were not listened to when they returned home and tried to enlighten others. They were vehemently contradicted by people who had just spent a few weeks listening to Wagner in Bayreuth, taking the waters in a German spa, or hiking along the Rhine. 'But my dear man, they simply loved us—nearly every one of them spoke English and they assured us that there could never be any quarrel between our two countries!'

The reactions of the average British visitor to Germany are understandable. Germany, and especially those regions frequented by the British, is very beautiful. The quaint little old towns, the easy-going customs in the *Bierhallen* and *Weinstuben*, so refreshing after the murkiness of British 'pubs' and the genteel boredom of English hotels; the entire holiday atmosphere with which the average British tourist was surrounded, was enough to make him see through rose-coloured spectacles. He was flattered by the attention paid to him, and the keenness on everything concerning him and his country. How was he to know that it was not prompted by disinterested kindness, but in the first place by the

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mania for everything British; in the second, by *Wissensdrang*, the curiosity of a nation obsessed with the desire for knowledge; and finally by the inevitable reaction of people suffering from an inferiority complex.

At home the Briton is not used to having much interest taken in him by others. Being self-satisfied, shy, yet proud, reserved, and not imbued with much curiosity, he neither opens out easily to others nor expects them to do so. Accustomed to this indifference, he is delighted during a holiday—when anyhow he is prepared to change some of his habits—if others reveal their secrets to him, and by their many personal inquiries make him feel interesting, important. Thus there was something flatteringly emotional, even romantic, about the way every fellow traveller, shop assistant, waiter, or casual acquaintance treated him. He imagined himself to be surrounded by friends, by people who were ‘just like ourselves’. It did not occur to his non-analytical mind that they appeared so much like himself, mainly because they were demonstrating a side which he himself did not possess, and, in fact, would hardly have cared to develop; also, because he was in a holiday mood, which made him respond to an approach the very eagerness of which he would easily have resented at home. But he was not conscious of any of this and too honest to suspect anything he did not see.

While it was excusable that he should be taken in by the German *Wesen* and German duplicity, there was no

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excuse for our politicians and diplomats allowing themselves to fall into the same trap. They should have known that 'our German cousins' were more unlike ourselves even than the Russians, and that though in England the surface may have little to hide, and straightforwardness is the rule, it was not the same in Germany. No wonder that the Germans, while envying us, at the same time thought us stupid and naïve. Messrs. Hitler, Ribbentrop, and Göring can seldom have had a better laugh than after the visits of certain distinguished visitors from across the Channel.

7

But all this belongs to the follies and self-deceptions of peace-time. To-day even the assurance of my beribboned neighbour at dinner could not make me believe that the British are not aware of the difference between the ideals in this war and in the last one, both here and in Germany.

The most vital issues in the last war were perhaps not dissimilar to those in the present one. But the external circumstances veiled them from all except the few who were blessed with clear vision. What was then hidden has meanwhile come to light.

In 1914 we were even more blinded than we were before this war. Our aims were therefore necessarily obscure. In 1914 the term democracy to most people meant very little. Since we possessed democracy, we

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took it for granted. No-one disputed its value, no-one assailed it openly. We had heard something about anti-democratic rule in Russia, but what did it matter to us how the Russians ordered their own house? Even if some of them were starving, how could this affect our own conditions?

As far as we knew, Germany and Austria were ruled by Constitutional governments, with parliaments; their laws seemed very much like our own. What spirit was at work behind those governments and laws was not our concern, and William II, for all the misery he had brought upon the world, we regarded as a fool—if anything, to be pitied. There was little to shatter our complacency and our illusions. *Our* system was sound, *our* future assured. Even if we were to lose the war we might possibly be poorer, but neither our accepted habits of life nor our religious creed would change. What was assailed was the Empire—not our mode of living, but some of our possessions; not the foundations on which our civilization rested, but merely some of its ornaments. The future progress of our own country could not be decisively affected whatever the outcome of the war.

To-day probably every Briton feels in his very bones that the present situation is different, and that anything but victory would mean not only slavery but an end to every privilege both spiritual and material.

I spent the first fifteen months of this war in parts of

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Britain as diverse as Sussex, east Kent, the south-west coast, the north-east coast, the Midlands, Tyneside, and the north of Scotland. I mixed with Service men of different ranks and with men and women of various professions, classes, and views. I cannot recollect hearing one single remark that did not suggest that they realized how fundamentally different this war was from the last one.

8

Can we doubt that ideals of whose essential rightness a nation is convinced are more inspiring than are those in which such conviction is lacking? What are the ideals for which the German soldier, the German worker, is fighting? You may say that those which their Leader has put before them are as inspiring as ours. But an ideal rooted in the eternal verities of the human spirit, and expressive of its real needs and aims, has creative potentialities, while one manufactured by propaganda and inculcated into people by the mesmerizing force of repetition has none of these qualities.

It is probable that the Germans, with the exception of very fanatical young Nazis, see something of the gulf that separates their new masters' true records from the stories broadcast about them. Stupefied though they have become, they are not completely blind to self-evident facts. It is they who are alleged to be the chief beneficiaries of the victories won on the home front.

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Though many foreigners may have been deluded by those victories, the German himself is too much dependent upon them not to see the difference between facts and fancy.

We shall never be able to gauge the response of the German soldier and workman to the war ideals put before him by his superiors, if we do not recognize the spuriousness of some, at least, of the most famous Nazi victories on the home front.

The one most loudly trumpeted by our own little Hitlers at home was the victory over unemployment. The most succinct reply to this fairy tale has been provided by the Member in the House of Commons who interrupted a relevant speech by one of his colleagues with the words: 'There is no unemployment at Dartmoor either.'

Of course you can solve the unemployment problem by conscripting people into forced labour; you can find work for them if, even in peace time, you set out upon the most gigantic rearmament in history; if you erect gigantic Government buildings all over the country; build gigantic motor roads (even if there aren't enough cars to use them), and other gigantic things for which your true economic resources provide no means. You can provide some of the required means if, by political or economic blackmail, you force smaller nations into trading with you—preferably with goods they don't really need, but which they have no power to refuse.

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You can solve your budgetary difficulties by paying starvation wages and by preventing—by means of concentration camps—those who receive them from raising a murmur.

You can, of course, also deprive thousands of your lawyers, doctors, journalists, business men, civil servants, artists, and scientists of their jobs and hand these over to people who, owing to their inferior qualifications, have been out of work, but are graced by Providence with purer blood or stronger party loyalties. Your new Catholic, Jewish, Socialist, Liberal, and other unemployed will have to depend solely upon the charity of personal friends, or else starve; so you will have no need to show them on your unemployment returns. If you choose to disregard every law of human decency then you can find unlimited ways in which to reduce your unemployment figures.

The second victory on the home front was the new employment of the workman's leisure. With what was that leisure filled? With military drill and the enforced attendance at new 'social centres'. What were the chief pastimes in those centres? Lectures, films, and plays which the Party had prescribed and which served exclusively as an 'education in Nazi culture'. It is questionable whether the German workman regards these new blessings as an improvement on the former activities of his leisure, and whether in this 'victory'—as in so many others—he does not perceive the discrepancy

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between fact and propaganda. Stunned though he must be by the incessant hammering of the propaganda machine, he may, nevertheless, be suspicious of some of the claims and slogans used to kindle his fervour for this war.

You may say that, even so, he is convinced that he fights capitalism, the Jews, and Western pluto-democratic degeneracy. Yet is there even for him anything inspiring in such ideals? Or he may be told that he is fighting for a greater 'German Unity', in which, under German tutelage, all countries will be prosperous and happy. Even he is not such a fool as not to see what that tutelage implies. Even he must occasionally hear of the outbreaks and the sabotage with which his new 'brothers' respond to their incorporation into the great family.

9

We, in this country, have taken up the present fight in the name of the truths that we proclaimed long even before war started. The German cannot help realizing that the ideals for whose sake he is urged to conquer the world have been altered by his leaders so many times that not one of them can possibly seem valid. At first Germany wanted not so much as an inch of anybody else's territory; then she began to speak of the need of protecting the independence and the happiness of her own minorities; then it was merely Danzig, and

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a few days later the 'Corridor' as well; then *Lebensraum* began to grow with a rapidity that must have been bewildering even to the Germans. But even *Lebensraum* was not the final ideal to rouse the Teuton's martial spirit. In the end, the Führer himself admitted that this was not a war for *Lebensraum* and *Blut und Erde*, but for a victory of the 'German way of life'. Either the corrupt democratic system or the system of the Germans must disappear, and, the cat jumping out of the bag, changed its colour yet again.

The annihilation of Jews, whose sway over the world provided one of the earlier incentives to the war, disappeared from the long list of German war aims, as did that of the 'pest in Russia', from whose contamination the whole world was to be freed. Then, after all the previous catch-phrases had proved their ephemeral value, that of the 'New Order' was finally raised on to the banner. And the German workman could ask himself in strange bewilderment which of the many slogans was that for which he really laboured and sweated and fought. His supreme Master himself had to admit the spate of ever-changing ideals when, in his New Year's message in 1941, he stated that, 'The gods compel those who have been called upon by Providence, to set themselves goals which often go far beyond their original wishes.'

We, in this country, have no need to shift our ideals with each fresh wind from the battlefields. In the poli-

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tical sphere we have always spoken of the right of small nations to their own independent lives, and, in the wider sphere, of the survival of democracy and Christian civilization. Our aims were rooted in our most sincere convictions and no Government would have had the power to change them.

Our fighting men know full well that their task is nothing less than to defend the very existence of their homes. What knowledge inspires the German soldier who finds himself driving his tank into one defenceless country after another? He may be told by Dr. Göbbels that Britain was intending to invade those countries next day, but what he actually knows from personal experience is that it is he who has invaded them.

To-day less than ever should I like to be a German. A German whose mind has not been completely warped by propaganda must realize by now that his country is fighting for little that is worth while. I also doubt whether, in his very heart, he does not know that the principles of truth and righteousness cannot be defeated even in this darkening age of ours. Further, he may suspect that 'the Sermon on the Mount is, in the long run, much stronger than all Hitler's propaganda and Göring's bombs and guns'.¹

¹ Lord Lothian's last speech (reported in *The Times*, 17th December 1940).

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10

The entire evolution of the Western world points to a growing ascendancy of the Christian principle, no matter how often that ascent has been halted and darkened. In no wise does the present conflict suggest that ours is an outworn civilization tottering to its grave. What we witness is not the decline of a decaying Egyptian, Greek, or Roman civilization after its pinnacle has been reached, nor of an individual empire such as the Spanish or the Italian after it has exhausted itself.

This is not a war of any individual empire for its own survival. In its fullest meaning it touches the very roots of universal principles and ideals which are far from having reached their harvesting stage. What is happening to-day is a crisis of those ideals. It is a crisis that is inevitable before they can manifest themselves more fully. So, if I were a German, I could not help admitting that I was fighting on the losing side and that nothing could stop the victory of my enemy.

From our point of view a clear vision and recognition of spiritual realities conveys, not merely hope, but certainty; yet not certainty in a fatalistic sense. Ultimately, it depends upon ourselves alone how the forces for whose survival we are fighting will achieve their victory. It depends on ourselves how long that victory may take to come—whether it will be gained at the

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price of comparatively small sacrifices or only after we have passed through a welter of destruction and an ocean of blood. Also, whether it will be such as to ensure peace for several generations to come. It is the maximum of our effort, both on the spiritual and the material planes, that alone can guarantee that the victory be a right one, and that our future will stand on sounder foundations than our past.

Chapter 10

THE ITALIAN APPENDAGE



I

From the very outset Italy was only the minor partner in the unholy alliance determined to smash the Christian way of living. What then does she, an avowedly Catholic country, stand for, and what is her position in a struggle of such intense spiritual significance?

The Italians have always had a genius for turning their State activities into something strongly savouring of comic opera. D'Annunzio's heroics over Fiume, and his subsequent saintliness 'de luxe' in his villa on Lake Garda, smacked as much of that form of entertainment as did the floods of tears in which Baron Sonnino, Italy's representative at the Peace Conference in 1919, tried to drown every decision that went against Italian interests. The never-ending parades of the Fascists were reminiscent of it, just as is the monstrous wedding cake which, under the name of the Vittorio Emanuele Monument, disfigures the centre of Rome.

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German parades and German monuments always seem slightly sinister. William II was the only comic-opera character in recent German history. Apart from him, the inhuman German efficiency and cold-blooded unity of purpose usually filled the onlooker with a feeling of acute discomfort.

Mention of Italy, on the other hand, would provoke on the part of your Briton a smile, half amused, half disparaging. An Empire-builder found it impossible to take the Italians seriously—they were good-natured, but essentially figures of fun.

There were, of course, many Britons who completely lost their hearts to Italy. They populated the smaller hotels along the Arno and the Grand Canal, charming villas in Fiesole and Capri, or the spacious houses in Rome. But they cared mainly for the Italy of yesterday and the glory that was. What they admired about the living Italy was the landscape before their eyes; the simple charm of the populace; the noisy good humour of the taverns; and the general colour and bustle. Political considerations never clouded the picture of their beloved Italy.

The average Briton has had few opportunities for watching the kaleidoscope of the Italian scene. He may admit the Italians' great past, their unsurpassed cultural and artistic achievements in the world, their frequent enthusiasm for the noblest of causes, and a childlike simplicity of soul akin to innocence, but when all is

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said, they remain for him chiefly an amusing people, met on a trip or seen on a stage.

Nothing arouses your resentment more than the funny little man with the pomaded moustache and celluloid collar who suddenly decides to become a tragic actor and insists on being taken seriously. You resent this even more if his sudden heroics are directed against yourself and he challenges you to accept him as an equal. His sword is no longer one of gilt cardboard, and instead of being entertained by his antics you feel outraged.

That Germany would march against us had long been suspected even though not always admitted. That the little man who sold ice-creams and lived on spaghetti would do the same, no-one believed until it actually happened. Inevitably, the indulgent smile on John Bull's lips turned into one of full-blooded scorn. I think that when Italy entered this war the average Briton's contempt for her was even greater than that for Germany, and, in the exercise of this contempt, we fell into the danger of losing our sense of proportion.

2

No matter how contemptible Mussolini's decision may have been it was never that of the whole of Italy. Even if it had been, it would never have called for the full blast of our wrath. You may be justified in allowing such wrath to cloud your vision when you are con-

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fronted with something really genuine in its vileness. But the vileness of Italy, or even of her leaders, was scarcely that; it was more the nastiness of the greedy pickpocket suddenly ambitious to play the part of a Condottiere.

The evil represented by Germany is really terrifying in its depth and magnitude. The Italians are merely an undisciplined people. In their vanity and moral instability they will follow both good and bad leaders, provided that the leader in question knows how to stir their sense of the heroic and the theatrical. They could scarcely have become wholehearted Catholics if the splendour of Rome had not dazzled and elated them. They will follow a Garibaldi or a Mazzini with just as much enthusiasm as a Machiavelli or a Mussolini; the lachrymose goodness of an Amicis with just as much fervour as the bombast of a Marinetti; Dante as well as D'Annunzio. While we in this country never lose sight of the difference between our admiration for a Milton and that for a Shaw, for a truly great orator and a Horatio Bottomley, the unbridled enthusiasm of the Italians is incapable of perceiving such distinctions.

In judging Italy's submission first to Fascism and then to Nazism, we must bear in mind that a people with an impressionable faith and flexible moral standards has no means of putting up resistance to doctrines reinforced by a rigid unity of purpose. It would

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be like expecting a boy with a toy pistol to oppose an armoured tank.

While the Nazi is essentially a fanatic, the Blackshirt is merely a romantic; he will treat his foes with castor oil and truncheons, but will be just as willing to captivate them by his charm. Both his cruelty and his charm will be genuine, whereas the 'charm' of the Nazi would never be completely divorced from his cruelty, and therefore would remain artificial. While the Italian can be made to follow his common sense, the German's reason is so much the slave of his obsessions that it will have no power to assert itself.

Italy represents an ageing civilization, trying to force herself into a second youth. In the fever which springs from artificial rejuvenation she tried to adopt a cure that would bring her back real youth.

Whereas Nazism in general and Hitler in particular have come to represent Germany, neither Mussolini nor Fascism represent Italy. While Hitler was borne upward by the deep-seated forces inspiring his country, Mussolini rose by his own astuteness and the ruthless energy of his party. In Germany, with her inability to accept individualism, a unity could easily be forged. The Leader became the head of a united country and the exponent of a united spirit. (The dissentients do not count—they are only a small minority and, in any case, their dissension arises from disagreement on methods and details, and not on essentials.) . . .

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Italy has always been a country of individualists. No amount of compulsion will ever eradicate that inborn trait. No Duce will ever succeed in depriving the Italian people of their passion for criticism, nor of their preference for the more modest pleasures of a freer life to the stern duties of an empire.

Had Mussolini realized from the beginning that, unlike Hitler, he had not surged upwards on the dreams of his people but had merely imposed himself upon them; had he understood that in his efforts to shape Italy according to his own mould he lacked the reinforcement of those currents which had always supported his colleague; had he, perhaps, been a little less of the shrewd 'realist' and more of a visionary, he might have acted with greater discrimination in the choice of his methods and of his friends and foes abroad.

3

In trying to assess the spiritual background of the present struggle, we are entitled to treat the role of Italy as merely incidental. Just as there are no political or economic issues at stake between ourselves and Italy, so are there no great differences between us on the spiritual plane. The same creed has helped to shape our morality, the same classical ancestry our minds. The only direction in which we can never allow the watchful eye to close is that from which the winds carry the Nordic gospel.

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Summing up, we must once again put before ourselves the question: are we fighting a country of whose politics we disapprove and against whose assault upon our own security we seek to defend ourselves? If that were all, many of us would say that even the possibility of defeat might not justify the blood and destruction that accompany the struggle. But we are fighting for aims greater than mere self-preservation.

The wyvern against which we are arrayed has for hundreds of years been growing strong and cunningly deluding the world. When it felt ready it attacked the very life springs of the faith and future of the Western world. Its aim is to annihilate everything that we have built up through hundreds of years of idealism and hard striving. The noblest visions of our seers, the greatest achievements of our heroes, all the most selfless deeds of millions of our men and women will be of no avail if we refuse to see the evil wyvern for what it is. The spirit that has written the pages of our history—not ours alone, but the entire history of progressing Europe—has made of us the trustees of a gospel that is to redeem the world. Out of that gospel most of the finest flowers in the garden of human evolution have grown.

When on the 28th September 1938 I heard that Mr. Neville Chamberlain was going to Munich, I shuddered. I may not have known what the right political action should have been, but I did know that you cannot sit down at the same table with the devil and seek

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compromise with him as a friend; whatever victory you may gain will be a Pyrrhic victory. By trying to buy off our own unpreparedness by selling another man's goods, we were playing the devil's own game.

Life is a series of compromises, but there are certain cardinal truths and principles on which compromise is impossible. We may compromise on methods and interpretation but not on the fundamental issues of right and wrong. In the present fight, we are not concerned with secondary matters of imperial policy, or the independence of this or that country; all these are incidental. What we are concerned with is the very essence of our life and our beliefs. We have a right to sacrifice our position, our families, perhaps even our honour. But we cannot sacrifice our spirit, however elusive that may be. We may possibly attain happiness even in prison; but we can live in nothing but suicidal misery if our prison life is deprived of the solace of faith. A compromise with the forces that are driving Germany would be a life of darkness into which even God's rays could no longer penetrate; for by such compromise we should have shut God out of our existence and sacrificed what the strivings of two thousand years have made of our souls.

Chapter 11

QUO VADIS GERMANIA?



I

No peace treaty which is not based on a dispassionate but courageous recognition of facts will keep Europe out of war for any length of time. From such a recognition the terms with regard to post-war Germany will emerge almost automatically.

After the last war we wavered between shedding humanitarian tears and cracking the conqueror's whip. Either of these methods by itself might possibly have led to success—together they were doomed to failure.

The whip we never employed seriously except in the one instance in which leniency was essential. I refer, of course, to the economic clauses of 'Versailles', the severity of which was as disastrous as was our soft-peddling of the political and military ones. Yet we have no right to blame our statesmen for this duality of attitude. Very few of us were conscious of the problems

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involved and of the true nature of our foe. Moreover, we suffered from a confusion of emotions, and our views were, to say the least, muddled. Once the war was over, we prided ourselves on being 'bad haters', as though hatred or non-hatred really had anything to do with facing facts. We made a great show of saying that the Germans were 'as good' or 'as bad' as ourselves, and thus obliterated the difference in the two conceptions of good and evil. This was tantamount to sacrificing our sense of morality. We regarded Germany as an innocent nation merely misled by bad rulers.

There are excuses for this last error in our judgement. Germany had not yet completely shed her disguise, and we, on our part, did not trouble to discover what was behind the mask. With the exception of the few of us who knew her intimately, we regarded her as the land of Goethe, the country of which Carlyle wrote with such industry and enthusiasm. The true significance of Fichte and Nietzsche had not yet penetrated the magic circle of our self-delusions, and we preferred to doze contentedly to the tune of 'Lorelei' to listening attentively to the words of Treitschke. As for such names as Gobineau or Houston Stewart Chamberlain, these were unknown to all but a handful of people.

To-day the situation is different. Though there are still here and there among us slumberers who dream of the 'land of thinkers and poets', most of us no longer have any illusions as to the true nature of Germany.

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This alone should enable us to go to the peace conference with minds clear of sentimentality and ambiguity.

2

Even to-day, our slumberers remind us that Germany is not Prussia. Only quite recently they were reminding us that Nazism was not Germany. Their inference is that, though we must muzzle Prussia, we must be 'sensible' in our treatment of the rest of Germany.

There is a good deal of truth in the contention that Prussia and the Catholic countries of Germany (though not all non-Prussian countries are Catholic) are separated from one another by wide differences. Therefore in the future we should help the non-Prussian States to throw off the Prussian hegemony, which has existed ever since the days of the Great Elector.

No-one at this moment can foresee what the peace terms will be. Reason suggests that Germany should be restored to that status which enabled her to show—for the only time in her history—some semblance of civilization. I allude to the days when the individual German States still enjoyed their independence.

A united, and therefore aggressive, Germany can exist only under the hegemony of Prussia. The cultural and denominational differences between Prussia and the Catholic States being considerable, it should not be impossible to evolve some means whereby that domination could be eliminated.

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In Germany the idea of regional independence within a loose federation would not be an anachronism, as it might conceivably be elsewhere. For the idea of federation and not that of a 'united' Reich really expresses the nature of the German's historical and political maturity. At heart, he is as much to-day a particularist as he was in Goethe's times. A country full of racial, historical, and denominational differences requires, in order to overcome these, very long traditions of political life. Both Germany's political experience and her civilization are far from having reached the requisite standard.

In a highly advanced country like Great Britain, denominational differences must be regarded as a drawback. The spirit of the times cries out for unity in every sphere, and in none more than in that of religion. We, in this country, have already learnt most of the lessons that denominational divisions can teach us. In Germany, Christianity has never been as much a reality as it is in Great Britain. She still can—and must—learn from denominational differences, which invariably denote lack of real identification with a gospel. Denominational particularism belongs as much as political particularism to her mental make-up. Britain's political genius being stronger than her gift for religion, her political particularism died before its religious counterpart. It died a natural death when, in the first place, we deliberately accepted the democratic principle, and in the second, when we consciously chose to become an

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empire of free nations. That there is still an Indian or an Irish question merely indicates that a process of so fundamental a significance as the establishment of a free union of half a dozen countries cannot be accomplished within one generation.

The essential condition for a successful solution of the German 'problem' on a basis of individual States is to make them into equal economic partners in a wider European federation. Only thus can Germany's demands for justice be fulfilled; only thus can we disarm all her future accusations of unfair treatment. The freedom to live, which means the right of each country to receive and to work in accordance with its true needs and potentialities, must be the basis of any future treaty.

The political and military control the victor will have to impose does not concern us here; but that such a control will have to be exercised unflinchingly and uncompromisingly is beyond question.

3

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that, whatever the future shape of Germany, we cannot afford to make the mistake of treating Prussia as the scapegoat and the other German States as the innocent victims. The spirit that has driven Germany forward for hundreds of years has not been operative through Prussia alone. The ideas of Germany's *Platz in der Sonne*, of German *Kultur*, of

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the superiority of *deutsches Wesen*, of *Herrenvolk* were not confined to Prussia. In Prussia they merely found a more blatant expression. The difference between her and the other German States is not one of quality, but of quantity. All these States willingly followed the identical gods. During the last few years they perpetrated identical crimes.

Those forces which have plunged the world into this war, which have made us realize what treasures we are in danger of losing and what terrible powers we are opposing, must have known what they were about when they chose as the leader and the symbol of Germany's age-old aspirations, not a Prussian, but a South German born far away from Prussia. Equally, none of the chief Nazis are Prussians. Himmler, Göring, Streicher, and Frank are Bavarians; Göbbels hails from the Rhineland and Hess from Franconia; and it is not without significance that the Nazi movement started in Bavaria and found there its most enthusiastic support. The German cities that symbolize Nazism are Munich and Nürnberg, and not Berlin. And Nietzsche and Treitschke, the two men whose doctrines have, in the last half-hundred years, done more than anything else to strengthen German megalomania, were Saxons. So was Richard Wagner, whose sensuous, non-'Aryan' music has warmed the German blood and exalted the idea of *Deutschtum*. In the parliamentary elections in the 'free' days the non-Prussian States were as eager to cast

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their votes for the brown crusaders as were the Prussian ones. Why was this so? Because Hitler merely represents 'in an extravagant way qualities of temper and a mental outlook firmly rooted in the German nation. He and his creatures have obtained popular acclamation because they represent the type of man which the average German tends to admire; their ideas have found acceptance because such ideas have not been foreign to the German tradition.'¹

Among Hitler's earliest and most powerful supporters were the industrialists and financiers, Röchling and Thyssen from the Rhineland. In fact the Prussian Junkers were the last to recognize him. No-one stood in his way with greater obstinacy than the arch-Junker Hindenburg.

The more emotional, less balanced, non-Prussian States were Hitler's first supporters. There is not a single reason for regarding them as less inimical than Prussia to his ideas. Our reasons for believing them so superior to Prussia were all part of our general ignorance of the true Germany. Because Dresden was so much more delightful a city than Berlin and the natives we met on our holidays in Bavaria so much nicer than the Prussians, we wove fairy tales about the superiority of the Saxon and the Bavarian. Ask any Tommy who was in the last war and he will tell you that no Germans

¹ E. L. Woodward, Oxford Professor in Modern History, in *The Origins of War* (Oxford University Press, 1940).

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fought with greater cruelty than the Bavarians and the Saxons.

To simplify the German problem by crying, 'Prussia, Prussia, alone', implies a total disregard of facts. All that we can say is that within the unifying orbit of German megalomania and aggression, the non-Prussian States represent the paler brand of what is the essential *Deutschtum*. Their traditions have been more affected by Western influences, and they are less good at producing ruthless war machinery than the Prussians. It follows that in the Germany of to-morrow it is their influence we must do our utmost to strengthen, but never without acknowledging that they are the originators and stalwarts of that same 'Niebelungen' obsession that is the gospel of every German.

4

Many people still contend that it can never be our business to dictate to another great country what forms and laws she should adopt internally. So long as those forms and laws do not interfere with the peace of the world that contention is justified. Unfortunately Germany has always chosen an inner structure which, sooner or later, has led to war.

Not only since the advent of Hitler has Europe lived under the shadow of war instigated by Germany. Those of us who were children before 1914—but have vivid memories—will remember that there was hardly a year

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between 1900 and 1914 when Europe did not fear that some spark of Wilhelminian policy might set alight the powder magazine Germany had been building up so assiduously. In the last seventy-five years alone the Germans have started five wars, besides four near misses. If they had had their way there would have been a war every eight years for the last three-quarters of a century.

This would not have been possible, and Germany's rulers could not have put their war machine into action if her inner structure, and the ideals to which she conformed most readily, had not made aggression the most natural policy to be pursued.

Preventative measures alone will not safeguard peace so long as we do not do something to educate the German nation. They themselves have refused to do it. "Take no German's word for it that they have done so . . . there were plenty of ways out for good Germans but precious few took them, just because they were precious few. . . . Never be duped by the type of German who says that he disapproves of atrocities but was obliged to commit them out of loyalty to the Fatherland. If one's father is a professional murderer, one should help the police—not rush into the same profession. . . . The real issue is, not what the Germans proclaim, but their conduct towards their neighbours."¹

However little Europe may have become a unity in

¹ Sir R. Vansittart, Chief Adviser to the Foreign Office, *Black Record* (Hamish Hamilton, 1941).

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spirit, she has, nevertheless, become one in many aspects of her material existence. Her economic, scientific, and even political activities are so completely interdependent that the idea of one nation having no right to interfere with the affairs of another has lost its meaning. When the balance of the greater body is upset by the 'inner' life of one of its members, that principle becomes a criminal fallacy. If poisonous gases escape from my neighbour's house and suffocate my children, it is my duty to interfere.

The regeneration of Germany is not impossible, for the soul of a people *can* be changed, and other peoples have succeeded in doing it. Why not Germany? 'Because she has not really tried . . . the cure will have to be a drastic and largely self-administered one. . . . As a nation they are quite old enough to know better, but they don't, and, so far, they don't want to.'¹

Only by enabling her to regenerate herself completely can we help Germany to sever her allegiance to a spirit that has made of her the chief aggressor in the modern world and the chief instrument in the fight against Christianity and most of the great religions.

The means by which Germany will have to be re-educated will be for the experts to decide. For us ordinary citizens the essential thing is to realize the necessity for such work and to give the experts our fullest support.

Whatever the actual methods—political or educa-

¹ Ibid.

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tional—that which is evil in German tendencies will have to be curbed. So long as the war goes on, strategy alone will compel us to administer to her some of the medicine with which she has always been so lavish in her treatment of others. It is the medicine of suffering.

The German people have suffered both in the last war and in this from a variety of hardships; but for many generations they have known none of the sufferings they have brought upon France, Belgium, Poland, Holland, Yugoslavia, and last, but not least, upon this country. Only by experiencing what the destruction of life and property through revengeful and indiscriminate bombing means can they learn the character of their own most favourite medicine.

Throughout history Germany has been willing to see sense only when she was down. The moment she asserted herself and no longer lived in fear of suffering, all that was worst in her nature came to the fore. Thus, since fear has always been the strongest deterrent for crime, suffering may well be the inevitable preliminary condition for her education.

We must never regard this question of inflicting suffering as one of revenge. We are fighting for a survival of everything that civilized humanity holds dear and that we know to be right. If this survival can be achieved only through the suffering of the Germans, obviously there can be no flinching.

When you suffer from cancer, you do not weep over

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the ailing body, but ask the surgeon to cut as deeply as he thinks necessary. If a mad dog attacks you and your family, you shoot it, even if it was your beloved pet. The greater good demands that the smaller evil be committed. To repay evil with good is a doctrine for the highly developed individual; he, alone, is in complete control of those spiritual forces whose radiation and example can transform the evil within his enemy. Even among individuals, however, there will not be many whose spiritual power alone will stop the attacking tiger.

We are nothing but dreamers if we believe that merely by being nice and 'Christian' we can overcome national evil or cure cancer. We may be able to do so in a few hundred years, but that day has not yet arrived. If we know not only the symptoms of a malignant growth, but its causes, we use the knife radically. We have, at present, no other means of preventing the disease from breaking out all over again.

Part Four

SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Chapter 12

NOT A WAR, BUT A REVOLUTION



I

Wars do not break out by accident any more than a man commits murder or suicide by accident. Political developments are merely the incidents 'in matter'. Their function is to keep the ball rolling on the material plane. But like all material manifestations, they result from causes that have far deeper roots.

I have heard people say, 'We are fighting this war to destroy an evil greater than that which any crusader before has been called upon to fight. Surely it is unfair that *we* should have to suffer so much.'

Is it not due to the very greatness of our cause that we have to carry the cross of such heavy responsibilities on our shoulders?

Most of the suffering in our individual lives is caused by our own follies. We may not be able to grasp the meaning of suffering inherent in the accidents of our

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birth and of the particular 'pattern' of our circumstances. But it has only one purpose: that we may learn from it.

Unfortunately, man is not at his best when he is contented. He easily becomes indifferent to the sufferings of others, and concentrates on how to safeguard his own happiness. His contentment enshrouds him so completely that he no longer sees what lies beyond it. Deal him a blow, and his eyes are opened as if by a miracle. Suffering becomes real to him and he begins to discover that his fellow men likewise suffer. Depending upon the help of others, he learns humility. Previously the idea of human fellowship lay outside his own enchanted circle. Now, he deliberately strives towards it. That only the poor know how to be charitable is more than an aphorism.

A far higher stage of evolution will be necessary before humanity will be capable of learning through happiness as much as it learns at present through pain. The man who derides religion is prone to say that the very fact of man's turning to religion chiefly in moments of affliction demonstrates how negative the religious way is. 'It is not the strong and successful man who is religious, but he who has failed,' he will say.

Even if we accept this fallacy, the fact remains that there is a deep significance in this close relation between suffering and religion. The purpose of religion is to cultivate what is best in man. At the present stage of his

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evolution, his best is never so much stimulated as when he suffers. In affliction, his entire spiritual being becomes sensitive and more active. At no other time is he in such a state both of spiritual responsiveness and creativeness. Suffering, which is accepted not in fatalistic self-pity but as a challenge, does not represent weakness, but strength. It calls forth a more self-conscious manner of living.

2

Nations, too, will not learn when they are contented.

We all admit that war is an affliction. Those whose life is based on faith know that punishment never comes undeserved. In a God-ordered universe there must be sense and meaning in everything. But that meaning does not often enter into the restricted field of our vision.

What is permissible to a child does not serve as an excuse for the misdeeds of an adult. His greater self-mastery and knowledge impose higher standards. The effects produced by his gifts may not lie in his own hands. Their main significance lies in the responsibility they entail. This is the only valid basis of his relationship to his gifts.

Our political responsibilities as citizens of the greatest Empire in the world, with all the advantages that this implies, were naturally very great. Greater still were our spiritual responsibilities. For in Britain we

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had evolved a civilization that on the whole represented a persistent effort to translate Christian principle into action.

It has been for some time the fashion among our 'inverted Jingos' to speak of Britain as a cauldron of everything that is contemptible; as a nation of shop-keepers, capitalists, hypocrites, and slave-drivers. But the sterile venom of their derision cannot alter facts that are indisputable in themselves, and which over and over again have been acknowledged by the world, reluctantly, admiringly, or enviously.

Of course our shortcomings are manifold. Yet for all our omissions in dealing with our social ills, we have achieved more than any other great European country. It is far easier for small countries to live in accordance with an ideal—just as for an individual this is easier than for a group.

Within the lifetime of one single generation we have halved maternal and infantile mortality; have increased the income of the workman; have added three pounds to the average weight of children in elementary schools; and built new houses at a rate of one thousand per day. All this leaves the achievements of other countries, Germany included, quite in the shade. Our critics at home and abroad would do well to study facts at first hand instead of feeding on propaganda literature brewed in Berlin or Moscow or possibly over their own typewriters. The whole structure of our com-

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munal life reflects, however dimly, our Christian principles.

Most of the reformers responsible for the improvements in our social fabric, for humanizing the law, abolishing slavery, and creating high standards for our social services and charitable organizations, were inspired by a faith which, no matter what its denomination, was inseparable from religious tenets.

3

While the benevolent spirit guiding this nation provided us with a self-protected island and with conditions most favourable for the building up of an ethical civilization, we ourselves did little in recognition of the responsibility arising from these gifts.

We need not go into details on the subject of our class distinctions and snobbery, our laziness, indifference to culture, proneness to self-righteousness; or remind ourselves that while sending out missionaries to Christianize the 'heathen', we usually took our Christianity for granted.

It is too much to say that we cherished our shortcomings. We were merely complacent, but to an extent that made of a minor failing our major vice. We were complacent because only in crises, great or small, would we face realities. We were complacent because we had become addicts to the philosophy of muddling through, and had, admittedly, made a success of it. We were

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complacent because we hate unpleasant truths and are second to none at imitating the ostrich. And because more than a century of unequalled prosperity had made of us the laziest nation in Europe. Though our innermost moral fibre strongly revolted against injustice, our complacency would immediately act as a soporific, taking refuge in sheer sentimentality. We called that sentimentality our 'Christian spirit', and, with its help, drew shutters over our eyes and armed ourselves with facile excuses.

This deceptive pseudo-Christianity ultimately produced a whole doctrinal edifice within which we could fool ourselves that in a God-willed world there could not possibly be room for evil. We were only too willing to forget that, though the world is God-willed, it is also man-made. Some of us, even among the best, began to believe that what looked like evil was merely misplacement of values and misdirection of thought. Why, even ills of the body were only the result of such thought! By redirecting our thought, we should soon be able to cure cancer and check the disease that gnaws at the bones.

In this complacent pseudo-Christianity many of us clung to the command to repay evil with good, for, in the end, this usually meant less exertion. We easily allowed ourselves to forget that Jesus Christ, with whip in hand and by no means offering the 'other cheek also', chased the moneylenders out of the temple.

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Increasingly denying the evil within ourselves, we naturally refused to see it in others. When faced with it in international affairs we pretended that it didn't exist or was not so bad as it seemed. ('I *do* believe that Hitler is really a good man, a teetotaller, non-smoker, no nonsense about women, really *such* an example.') Hating nothing so much as having to face facts, we relied on muddling through somehow. 'Don't let us take life too tragically, things will turn out all right in the end; you must just keep on believing in the best in human nature.'

But if Christianity is anything, it is not goody-goody, nor can it be expressed by muddling through. Its only method consists in facing facts as frankly as possible and then acting radically. You either believe that its dictates are true and try to live up to that conviction, or you are not a Christian. You cannot be a Christian in your attitude to your children but follow different counsels in your business. Christianity does not recognize different codes of ethics for different occasions.

4

Did we ever learn, during the years of prosperity, to reflect upon what sort of civilization we represent?

If destiny is kind, it may for a long time let us continue to be false to our ideals. If it is kinder still, it will shake us out of our complacency and open our eyes before it is too late.

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In the past, every warning we received was met by indifference. The one thing we refused persistently to do was to acknowledge realities. We witnessed the growth of the German menace, and instead of forcing, by the example of our courage and determination, the democratic countries of Europe to unite with us to stem the rising tide, we took refuge in convincing-sounding but sentimental slogans, such as, 'You cannot keep a great nation down'. Trusted and experienced men 'on the spot' informed our Government of the true designs of our enemies, but the men we had chosen to conduct our policy refused to listen. Just like ourselves, they preferred to believe that 'it wasn't half as bad as it looked' and that 'you must trust the other man until he proves you wrong'. The economic depression and unemployment afforded us a stern warning; but we replied to it with half-hearted compromises, refusing in the face of vested interests to be radical and courageous.

Don't say that the country was ready to do anything but had no power to force the Government. A country gets the government it deserves and which expresses the views of the majority. In a country like ours, an unrepresentative government could not remain in power over a period of years. It was not the Government alone, but we men and women, in towns and villages, who shed tears over unfairly treated Germany. It was we who were unwilling to make the personal sacrifice without which the threat of the economic de-

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pression and unemployment could not be heeded. If a country is lacking in the fibre and the guts to boot out a government with which it really disagrees, it deserves nothing better than the failures with which its government presents it.

5

To-day even some of those who have always managed to lay the blame for every fresh German misdeed at our own door, agree that in this war Germany represents the anti-Christian powers. In doing this they imply that we, on the other hand, represent the Christian ones and all those akin to them. What follows from this in terms of actual conflict? That to defeat Germany we must support the spiritual powers of Christianity and of the other great creeds—in the universe as well as those within ourselves. If we really are fighting for the decencies of a civilization inseparable from religious beliefs, then the successful outcome of this war must be an intensification of that civilization.

It does not follow that because in the past, both as a nation and as individuals, we have failed to make our Christian resources sufficiently strong to prevent this war, to-day, when the issue is quite clear, we should rely on anti-Christian resources only. These are symbolized by everything that is destructive. In a war we must kill and bomb and inflict misery. But we cannot pretend that such methods represent the Christian mes-

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sage. They express war on its lowest, its most material plane.

Victory of arms in itself will not bring the fulfilment that we all hope will be the outcome of the present struggle. Though some people claim that the material plane is the only real one—a view that not very many would appear to hold—those of us who do not subscribe to it must face the conflict on the higher plane as well: the plane of construction, in fact, of spiritual activity. It is on this plane that we can lend support to the powers we believe we are fighting for.

6

This war more than any other national issue in the past has become a test case for our beliefs and our civilization. What for many years has been latent in our lives has finally been brought to a head and reached its crisis. No longer can there be room for any quibbling about the issue. The war is the lens through which our shortcomings are seen with terrifying clarity.

Because of this, the war is both immediate reality and a symbol of things that go far beyond the actual struggle. It is a symbol of the spiritual revolution which was inevitable and which, subterraneously, has been brewing for a long time. 'This war is not a war between nations like the last war,' said Lord Lothian in the memorable speech on the eve of his death, 'it is more a revolution than a war.'

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In many spheres of life there were signs of the approaching revolution. Science, psychology, literature, music, the arts, even religion, in the last thirty years, all underwent changes that were of a more radical nature than any since the Renaissance. In music we began to turn away from tonality; in the arts from representation; in science and medicine from a purely materialistic conception both of the universe and of man; in religion from a strictly dogmatic and denominational outlook.

A revolution, no matter how subdued its rumblings may be for a time, must finally culminate in an outburst. We would be very shortsighted if we were to assess this war in terms of armed conflict alone. Revolutions seldom express themselves in terms similar to those of their original cause. While murder and bloodshed are their traditional consummation, their origins may quite possibly be traced to a bad harvest or economic depression, misuse of power by a king, slave traffic, a popular awakening through more general education, or a need for parliamentary reform.

It needed the war to reveal clearly the true forces that are at work behind the present spiritual revolution. Like most revolutions it is a revolt against the past; a past epitomized by restrictions that former conceptions had imposed upon the freedom of the spirit. Whether we call these restrictions Industrialism and Mechanization, Naturalism or Rationalism, they were chiefly the offsprings of the Renaissance.

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After the narrow religious dogmatism of the Middle Ages, the reaction which the Renaissance represented brought a new enlightenment and new ways to discovery. For the first time in the Christian era the doors to intellectual pursuits were opened wide. What matured during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the eighteenth was diverted into channels of 'pure reason', and, except in England, led to a very marked divorce from religion.

This was followed in the nineteenth century by an accentuation of the philosophy of Materialism. In England this expressed itself chiefly through the advance of mechanical science and the new doctrine of Socialism. Minds which until the Renaissance had obeyed one authority only, that of the Church, and had remained ignorant of the physical world as revealed by reason, plunged headlong into the discovery of this unknown world. They concentrated more and more upon those aspects of life that could be perceived by reason and which belonged to the physical sphere. The late nineteenth century and the first decades of the present one have brought the materialistic conception, with its deification of science, and especially of mechanics, to its highest pitch. In our own lifetime the pendulum had perforce at last to swing back.

In a society based so strongly on a materialistic conception of the universe, things with knobs and wheels and wires are treated as the most desirable products of

NOT A WAR, BUT A REVOLUTION

man's genius and are bound to crowd out many of the more natural modes of life. But such a conception is diametrically opposed to the Christian one. Though many of the men and women who were moved by the forces of the new revolt remained unconscious of its deeper significance, they became its instruments in spite of themselves.

As specialists, artists, scientists, or poets, they were solely concerned with the revolt within their own professional sphere. They naturally tried to deal with it in terms of their own technique alone. It was not their business to look beyond the boundaries of their particular work. But since their very gifts arose from a more sensitive fibre than is possessed by the majority, they became aware of the new currents while others were still oblivious to them.

Whereas formerly there was only individual groping and sending out of feelers, the present conflict has brought the various currents of revolt into one great flow. To-day the meaning of the conflict is written with letters plain for all to see. It is part of our destiny that they should be written in blood. That the man to bring them so clearly before us would be a flabby little vegetarian and teetotaller from a provincial town in Austria, a complete failure in ordinary life until terrific furies took possession of him, none of the heralds of the new times could have foreseen.

Chapter 13

THE TASK OF THE INDIVIDUAL



I

At the beginning of the war there were many people who complained that they were too old, or, for other reasons, were unable to be in the fighting line or useful in other forms of national service. Speaking thus, they limited their appreciation of the war to its purely material aspect. In reality, they have not only a part to play, but one which, in the end, may prove among the most important of all.

Spiritual activity is primarily the sphere of the individual. Leaders can do no more than point the way. You can give orders to an army, as a body of thousands of men to do certain things, but a spiritual effort must be left to the individual. This is one of the chief reasons why Christianity has so often led to misunderstanding. For Christianity is meant for *man*, and not for men. The Christian nation is not one which, from above, has been forced into the Christian way of living, but a

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nation of individuals, each one of whom has succeeded in making that way his own. It is of the essence of every spiritual doctrine, whether it be Christian, Buddhist, or Taoist, that it can be practised through individual effort only. The communal worship of a congregation in Church is of little value if, beyond hymns and common prayers there is no individual contribution and no mode of life through which the various members may put vital substance into the worship.

Many people argue that if Christianity and the powers akin to it were more than a myth, and if we were indeed fighting for their victory, surely those powers themselves would have defeated the foe long ago. 'If there is a God,' such arguments usually conclude, 'and Hitler represents anti-Christ, why doesn't God strike him down without making innocent people suffer?'

If God had struck down our foes long ago we should have been deprived of all the lessons that only suffering imposed by war can teach us. There is a far more important point as well. Man has been placed in the universe and given a large measure of what is usually called 'free will' (but it is really free understanding). This means that he has not to act as the blind tool of powers greater than himself, but to collaborate with them of his own accord. Darker powers may occasionally take possession of him and drive him against his own will, but even they cannot do so unless the doors are opened to them. Neither Jesus Christ Himself, nor

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any truly spiritual powers, ever impose themselves upon man unless he deliberately invokes them. 'Ask and ye shall receive'—but first, ask! And in the Christian gospel asking implies a good deal.

The only way in which the Creator may apparently interfere with man's free will and alter the balance of cause and effect is through grace. Otherwise it is one of the inviolable laws of Christianity that its forces can operate in man's support only in direct proportion to his own effort. In the intensity of that effort lies the key to the response with which it will be met.

Even in the present struggle, when most of their work on the physical plane is threatened, these forces cannot act on man's behalf so long as he is content to ignore them. While leading lives that are only vaguely in accordance with Christian principles, we cannot expect that when things become too much for us higher powers will immediately lift the burden from our shoulders. The Christian teaching is held together by an unbroken chain of logic that works with absolute precision of cause and effect.

It is obvious that to-day, when our entire future may depend on assistance from 'above', the magnitude of the individual's responsibility is immense.

It becomes even more so when we remind ourselves that this time no-one is allowed to stand aside. The lessons the war can and must teach us are not for those at the front only. The soldier's individual effort, is

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necessarily circumscribed. It is the nation at large, the civilians, the women, the elderly, the 'unimportant' ones who are to-day in the front line. But it is a completely new sort of front line, one that enables the fighter to cultivate his individual thought and initiative. His own spiritual centre can still be his chief source of inspiration. This is a completely new phenomenon in modern warfare—one of the many that indicate the less circumscribed, the more universal character of the present conflict.

To-day, everyone must share in the suffering—not the soldier alone. There is a profound meaning in this new universality of suffering and sacrifice. Everyone has to learn from it. For this is not a political war, but one of the people; not merely a war, but a revolution; not a material issue, but a spiritual one. None of these can be fought out by armies alone.

It always comes back to it, that in the present war the task of the individual is utterly different from what it has been in former wars. Not only as an ambulance driver or A.R.P. Warden has he to make his contribution, but as a spiritual entity as well, enduring sacrifices, learning from experience, and growing in spiritual stature. Just as the universality of the nation is involved so the whole of his being must play its part.

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2

There is no other way in which the individual can lend support to the Christian forces than by strengthening these within himself. It is he alone who can enable them to act through him, and he can do it only through the way in which he lives. This is obviously the Christian way. For Christianity provides the way revealed by Truth—and that way is also Life. Mobilizing the forces of Christianity can, therefore, be identical with one thing only: living it.

I am fully aware of how difficult, almost impossible, it is to speak convincingly of the application of the Christian gospel in daily life. Its truths have been repeated so often, unctuously or thoughtlessly, mechanically or threateningly, that, for the average person, they have practically lost their meaning. We listen to them on Sunday morning as if to some abracadabra, which we forget as soon as we leave our pew. Yet, since without them we cannot live the kind of life we consider right, and they can never really be imposed on people from without, they must be stated and restated, and by no-one more than the individual himself.

Most of us know that we should trust in God, who will never fail us; be truthful and honest, indifferent to wealth or poverty, honours or disgrace, success or failure; that our aim must be to master our passions rather than be their slaves; to be charitable and humble

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and on our guard against gossip and malicious talk. Yet by constant repetition the very words which set forth that to which we aspire most have become stale and hackneyed. They do, however, contain the truth, so it remains for us to try to put life into them—which means, translate them into action. This becomes less difficult if we constantly remind ourselves that whenever we have attempted to follow them in the past, the religious way has proved more efficacious than any other method or stratagem. It is of no avail to do this heedlessly, or to apply those truths mechanically. No effort can be creative—the religious effort least of all—unless it is made with deliberation and in complete consciousness of what it demands of us.

In moments of great affliction we find it comparatively easy to rediscover the validity of the Christian counsel. As soon as the danger, and with it the fear, has passed, we fall back into self-indulgence and indifference. The difficulty of virtue lies not so much in its application as in remembering the need for it. Great crises will open our eyes to its necessity, but their impetus is not permanent.

Every age—and the last twenty or so years have been particularly prolific in this respect—provides innumerable cases of spectacular conversion under the tutelage of some new pseudo-religion. Former agnostics will suddenly give themselves unreservedly to a religious way of living and proclaim in public confessions or suc-

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cessful books that they have found the only secret of Life. And as often as not, a little while later we find them returning to their former outlook, possibly even more cynical than they were before. Their original conversion was neither fraudulent nor based on self-deception. Once, however, the forces generated by it had expended themselves, all the 'life' went out of the newly found 'way'.

This apparent ineffectiveness of the religious way does not imply sterility, as the 'sheep found and lost again' would often have it. It merely shows that, like everything that is genuine, the religious way is not a magic formula. It requires persistent effort and does not carry the seed of its own confirmation for all time. That seed must be sown each day anew.

3

Everyone who has tried it knows how difficult it is at first to follow the religious advice, even in a small way. Though its goal is happiness, its shortest road leads through suffering. By imposing upon us today so much suffering, Fate itself provides the conditions in which the Christian revolution of the individual is more easily accomplished.

Suffering easily produces bitterness and resentment, or a fatalistic acceptance and self-pity—results that are decidedly non-Christian. The spirit of Great Britain has, so far, enabled our nation to rise to the painful occasion in a

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different way. 'With a kind of instinct she sees a little better on a cloudy day and in storm of battle and calamity she has a secret vigour and a pulse like cannon.'¹

From suffering and sacrifice rises some of the most potent sap without which no genuine spiritual growth would seem possible. Their value in furthering such growth is stressed by all the great religions. But it is the quality of the sacrifice that counts, its deliberation and the motive behind it. Its spiritual value in the present instance would be lost if it were merely forced upon a grudging people.

When a German is compelled by the Nazi régime to subscribe lavishly to the *Winterhilfe* or to make other *völkische* sacrifices, the spirit behind his action cannot be regarded as identical with that which since the very beginning of the war inspired British people voluntarily to give up so many of their former privileges. There are exceptions in Germany as there are in this country; but there can be little doubt as to the predominant character of the sacrifices as a whole.

Just as most of the sacrifices made during the last few years by the Germans expressed that spirit of compulsion and regimentation typical of Germany, so the character of our own sacrifices is akin to the ideals for which we are fighting and to the regeneration of spirit that is already taking place in the British people. Let us take a few examples.

¹ R. W. Emerson, 1856.

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Among the cardinal principles of Christianity is the sense of fellowship and community. War has already taught us a good deal about this. The methods may be most unpleasant and strongly resented by the pupils, but the fact remains that there is no escape from learning the lesson. People who, living their sheltered and secluded lives, were completely ignorant of the minds and ways of their fellow citizens, are thrown together by the new circumstances and forced into sharing their sleep, their feeding, and countless other experiences. People from towns, as ignorant of the ways of the country as though it belonged to a different planet, are obliged to share in the lives of rural communities; while men and women on the land see with staggering surprise, indignation, or pity the limitations or prejudices of their urban brethren. Secrets about human misery, ignorance, sordidness, are revealed to the nation at large, and even to its Government. In a Christian community there should have been no place for such conditions, nor for the ignorance of people in power, who should have altered them long ago. However, the first step towards a practical application of the Christian word is revelation of truth, even if it be only a sordid truth.

The sanctity of the Englishman's home and possessions is not the only one of our traditional dogmas whose lamented passing has had beneficial effects. Suddenly there is no longer any sanctity about them; any

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accidental bomb may turn them into a heap of rubble. Had he formerly suffered only a fraction of such a loss at the hands of his Government, or his neighbour, he would have considered that the very foundations of civilization had been destroyed. Now he accepts the inevitable, grudgingly, of course, but without feeling that an assault on private property need necessarily knock the bottom out of his faith. His entire attitude to possessions is changing. There is no longer that sense of permanence and stability about them which used to be one of the unshakable tenets of his philosophy. Of course he resents this imposition of a new philosophy, but the fact remains that lifelong beliefs have been shattered, and this is what matters.

Then there is the problem of industry.

For generations past we have been one of the laziest nations in the world. Pleasure, admitted or disguised, took up almost as much of our time as work. The sanctity of the week-end and of the evening (and of many other hours as well) spent in the most varied efforts to kill time had become axiomatic. In other advanced countries a large proportion of the population would spend the hours between 6 p.m. and bedtime in trying to learn something, or in cultural pursuits, or, at any rate, in intelligent conversation. We, on the other hand, wasted those hours watching games that implied gambling, visiting cinemas, 'pubs', dancing places, bridge parties, social gatherings, or listening to

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the wireless—all efforts that required a minimum of mental exertion. Leisure was not something to be employed pleasantly but constructively, but devoted to the process of 'forgetting life'. The beneficial hour or two of relaxation was extended into twice and even three times its length, and sacrificed to things that offered no real relaxation but brought about either an intensified activity of the nerves or a complete mental coma.

The war has changed all this. Men and women who, formerly, would not have dreamt of giving up any of their leisure, are spending entire nights performing duties which require the utmost exertion, which are neither gay, nor act as soporifics. They are cramming more work, goodwill, and fatigue into one night than they would have formerly put into a whole month. The basis of most of their former activities was selfishness. The spirit of the present ones is that of self-sacrifice and fellowship. And this spirit, while completely genuine, is taken by everyone for granted. You may say that the new occupations are giving people a sense of adventure they have never known before. Quite so. But it is the right sort of adventure; and if the spirit behind it can be kept alight after the war a great step towards a better future will have been taken.

4

Women as a class have been profoundly affected by this change from inane pleasure-seeking to purposeful

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industry. Many of those belonging to the type which previously wasted so much time in trying to kill it have shown themselves willing and able to play their full part in the life of the nation. Far from being out-done by their men-folk, they have stood up to what was demanded of them in a manner that will always remain one of the most surprising pages in British history. You need not look into the ambulance depots, the canteens, the hospitals and A.R.P. centres to observe their transformation. Visit any village in these islands and see how the wives have completely taken over the work of their husbands and sons; how they administer the estate or the farm; plough the land and milk the cows, and suddenly know the secret of how to run their houses efficiently and look after their children, and yet find time to drive ambulances or work for the local hospital.

No civilized life can be complete to which the women do not supply their full contribution. After the war their duties will obviously not be the same as they are now, but their new spirit of adventure and usefulness and the collaboration into which they have been drawn cannot be effaced. Though their particular spheres will always be those of culture, social work and the home—everything, in fact, that a home in a country both civilized and cultured should stand for—the discovery of their own potentialities which the war has brought to them, cannot but help to prepare them for some greater post-war role.

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5

On every hand there are signs that the war, apart from its destructive effect—chiefly, though not exclusively, on the material side—is doing its best to prepare us for a future in which the term ‘Christian civilization’ will have a more real sound than it has had hitherto. But this collaboration on the part of Fate can achieve little if the individual does not support it by his own effort.

Witnessing each day the destruction of yet another of the possessions and privileges he used to take for granted, he may not find such an effort beyond his power.

As it happens, at moments of crisis and danger the Briton is at his best. Since civilization implies, among other things, strength of character and the gift for instinctively applying principles which the less civilized man can arrive at only after prolonged mental effort, it could not be otherwise. The war is turning indifference into charity, laziness into industry and discipline, diversity of purpose into unity, aversion to facing unpleasant facts into the ingenuity to overcome them, and self-indulgence into heroism. The undercurrents of British civilization in conjunction with the traditions most responsible for shaping the national character, have together revealed the latter’s whole nobility.

What will be far more difficult is to carry over the

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ardour of the moment into peace-time conditions. For countless people, the present war is the greatest crisis in their lives. Under its stress and in the face of the fear it inspires many of them seek refuge in the Christian gospel and make the effort to shape their conduct according to its commands. Will they continue to do this when the present tension has been relieved and daily problems are less harrowing? This question, and all it implies, touches one of the leading individual problems of the present day.

In the anguish of these times we are realizing how secondary are many of the things we have cherished most. Home, family ties, financial security have all revealed their most ephemeral side. In the past we tried to ignore that side, or to replace it by something solid and lasting. To-day we must admit that to a very great extent our efforts were in vain. This realization alone leads to one that affords a sense of stability and of unity of purpose, namely, that nothing is so important as our relationship with God. Only out of such an acknowledgement can a sense of real security be born. But to transform this acknowledgement into practical activity, simplicity and humility are required.

Among the chief causes of man's discontent is his uncertainty as to which is the right course to take. He is bewildered by the diversity of many possible solutions and thus deprived of a sense of unity of purpose. Hence his lack of inner peace. The religious way,

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though at first more difficult, proves to him, finally, simpler and more efficacious than any other. Where, formerly, there was conflict between opposing motives and ways there is now one road, stretching clearly ahead of him.

To put a Christianization, rendered possible by temporary stress, on a lasting basis there is only one way—that of incessantly remembering the paramount importance of our relationship to God. We must persuade ourselves, day after day, that nothing else really matters, and we must attempt this by every available means; by reasoning it out, by accepting it emotionally, and, if it be given to us, by meditation. Once this conviction has become part of our entire being, the practical application in daily life will unfold itself naturally.

6

This is where the question of religious observance comes in. For, apart from the selfless adoration of the Deity inherent in all religious sentiment, such observance provides the technique to keep our spiritual ardour alive.

Prayer and meditation are the backbone of all religious effort. They, alone, lead us to that centre of spiritual reserves upon which we have drawn in times of exceptional stress and which are still open to us. Those reserves are sealed to all forms of approach except that through prayer. But such prayer must be in-

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tensely 'awake' and self-conscious. Emotions provide the fuel without which it would lack the required intensity. There must, however, be no self-hypnotism about it, no mechanical repetition of words learnt by heart, nothing but constant awareness of the meaning of our supplication. It must be the result of a complete co-ordination of emotional and intellectual faculties.

There is something more mysterious about prayer than about all modern inventions put together. I do not claim to know what the full explanation of that mystery is, but I do know that a prayer which is an honest expression of our highest motives never remains unanswered. The response to it may not come at the exact moment when we expect it, its material results may not take the shape we have anticipated, but it never fails to bring fulfilment.

The desire for enlightenment and the fulfilment of God's word will always be the basis of a genuine prayer. Nevertheless, it cannot be claimed as is so frequently done—that prayer must not embrace personal and material problems. Our entire life is involved in such problems, and if we were to exclude them from our prayers religious life would be lacking all reality.

It is prayer for the sake of personal problems which requires the maximum of self-discipline. The spirit underlying such prayer must be one of complete honesty. Though its central motive will, invariably, be the gratification of a selfish desire, we must try

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gradually to transform that desire into one to be of service. Though at first this is extremely difficult, it is not impossible to achieve. The first condition for success is precision in the formulation of our desire. It must also be based on a recognition of our true abilities and not on an assumption of fictitious ones or on those which we should merely *like* to possess.

To discern in our assessment of ourselves and of our motives the difference between the true and the imaginary requires a difficult mental process. Most of us go through life deceiving ourselves about our true ambitions, motives, and qualifications. It therefore takes time before we can establish what our highest motives in relation to our true abilities and to our material problems really are. Yet a truthful self-valuation is the essential condition for a prayer concerned with personal difficulties.

The more we pray the easier it becomes to cast aside both selfish ambitions and illusions about ourselves. The picture of what is real and what is illusory in our make-up becomes clearer, and this invariably seems to go hand in hand with an increase in the effectiveness of our prayers.

I am painfully conscious of how difficult—almost impossible—it is to speak of the effectiveness of prayer to anyone who has not had first-hand experience of this. The atheist will never fail to retort that, if prayers were really answered, there would surely be fewer unhappy

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people among the religious community. Not being the keeper of the souls of these people, I can offer no valid explanation. I can only suggest that the reasons may lie in their inability to put themselves into the right attitude of mind or to be really honest with themselves. There may also be something inherent in their psychological make-up that robs their prayer of its efficacy. But even if such persons may have failed often, the very fact that they continue to trust higher aid would seem to indicate that their prayers cannot always have proved abortive. Finally, I doubt whether there are as many unhappy people among those who believe in the power of prayer as there are among those who do not.

Quite apart from the causal effect of prayer, there are other reasons which render it so helpful.

Whether its effects are spiritual or merely psychological does not alter the fact that prayer never fails to be a source of strength, moral and mental. Call it self-delusion—but the results are real.

Through prayer we gain a more accurate sense of proportion with regard to ourselves and our problems. Whereas previously these may have been harassing and all-important, they now become insignificant. Having switched ourselves on to the current of more eternal issues, we find it easier to see the temporary ones in their true proportion. The fog of inflated ambitions and imaginary fears has been cast out from the chambers of

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mind and heart, and clarity of vision has taken its place. No other effort on our part could possibly provide a similar general corrective.

But prayer is not a miracle-manufacturing machine, and its effects are not everlasting. It requires the utmost inner discipline and must be applied each day anew. Slacken its honesty or intensity, miss it on occasions, and the landscape around is once again hidden behind threatening clouds, its forms grow indistinct and the sense of proportion becomes distorted. Before you know where you are, you are caught in former fears, and lose yourself in schemes that go wrong.

To people accustomed to genuine prayer, all this must sound commonplace. It is stated here because I cannot conceive of a better world order and a truly Christian civilization if growing numbers of people do not clarify their vision through prayer and draw upon the tremendous spiritual forces latent in it.

In our present task we can ill afford to ignore aid from whatsoever quarter—least of all from the purely spiritual one. We have no right to claim that we have already done everything in our power, and learnt all the lessons that would entitle us to final victory. If we think of this war as the culmination of a spiritual conflict, the like of which has never shaken Europe before, we must admit that spiritually we are only just beginning to proceed in the right direction.

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If victory were to come to-morrow, much of the new land the soul has discovered since September 1939 would probably be lost again. Yet the purpose of the war is that that land should not be lost, but that it should provide a permanent addition on which a better future may be raised.

So long as there are still people who think wishfully in terms of personal security and comfort, and strive to find loopholes for themselves in the new order born of war, so long as there are others who play with the idea of compromising with the foe in order to lessen the present discomforts or to safeguard their own privileges, we shall have to continue to learn. We dare not assume that our goal can be attained at anything less than the maximum price, and without our having drunk the full cup of suffering.

Great victories are never won by half measures. They can leave no room for any inner reservations, and require the straining of the last sinew, and the mobilizing of all that is best in us.

I cannot conceive how this can be done unless we tap the religious forces that are latent in the country. Our ordinary mental and physical resources are simply inadequate to cope with all that lies ahead of us. Though practical Christianity—the modes of life and thought diametrically opposed to those of Germany—is an essential contribution to victory, I doubt whether in itself it can be enough. Religion alone provides us

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with that final and decisive margin of reserves which, otherwise, we cannot invoke. Only with its help can we hope for a victory and a peace that will give sense to the present war and a meaning to our suffering.

Part Five

.

TOWARDS WHAT BETTER FUTURE?

Chapter 14

SERVICE INTERLUDE



I

The establishment of a future the hope of which enables many people to bear the hardships of the moment, will prove more difficult than it need be, if we, as individuals, do not begin immediately to clarify our thoughts as to what sort of future we really want. Once our own ideas have taken definite shape we can begin to influence public opinion.

There are more ways than one in which the individual citizen can make the influence of his views be felt; but no way is more effective than that of example—a doctrine proved in action. There is a sort of radiation about a man who sincerely tries to translate his ideals into terms of actual living. In doing this, he strengthens what is best in those who come into touch with him; and they, for their part, cannot help reflecting something of his example. Over and over again the present war has shown how contagious courage, charity, selflessness,

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even heroism, can be. But the 'good' life is contagious not only at those rare moments which call for heroism. It works just as effectively in normal times. The man who lives the 'good' life, deliberately collaborates with spiritual forces and exercises a sort of telepathic emanation which extends far beyond his immediate physical circle.

In the following pages we are concerned, however, not with 'esoteric' influences, but with the more rational ways in which our corporate future can already be prepared. What matters is to establish without delay certain general principles. The working out of such principles in detail and their translation into actual reforms will be the job of experts after the war is over. But experts unaided by the clear vision of those whose aspirations they are to put into practice work as if in a vacuum. Their efforts will remain unco-ordinated and affect detail rather than general reconstruction.

2

We shall be badly handicapped in our planning of a post-war Britain if we do not attempt to correct some of the lesser evils the war has brought into focus. Wars evoke both the best and the least pleasant national traits. Some of these seem for a variety of reasons to choose as their stronghold the armed Services. The Services affect to-day every class of the population, practically every family. So we can limit

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ourselves to dealing with the 'Service' aspect of those evils.

It is quite natural that in war time the Services should become the apple of the country's eye. But it is one thing to provide them with every facility and every comfort to which they are entitled, and another to shut one's eyes to an abuse of those privileges.

Among the best known of such abuses is the wastage on the part of the Services. At a time when the people on the home front—in their own, less spectacular way every bit as much soldiers as those in uniform—have to be economical with every scrap of food, the catering in the Services continued as if there were no war.

There are probably few officers' messes where you can get a piece of bread with a crust. There are, however, a great many in which the dustbins are filled with entire loaves of which the crumb alone has been used. But the crusts are not all. 'A farmer has told me', wrote a correspondent in the *Daily Telegraph*, 'that he always collected 30 to 40 stale loaves from an Army billet, that he always found half a sack of perfectly good porridge oats waiting for him, and that he sometimes even found tins of salmon unopened.'¹ Another correspondent wrote, 'Several sausages, several rounds of bread spread thickly with butter, tinned salmon, and rashers of bacon are regularly thrown into the pig-swill bin. Much milk is thrown away in another billet.'²

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 20th December 1940.

² *Ibid.*

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Throughout the first eighteen months of the war entire cheeses have been jettisoned in camps where the troops did not care for cheese. When someone pointed out that the cheeses might be offered to people willing to pay almost their weight in gold, the answer was that 'orders' provided for so much cheese per head, and if the men did not want it, that was their own affair.

If pressed for an honest answer, most soldiers would admit that, whatever is left over of any of their provisions goes 'down the sink'. 'It would be impossible for the officers I have here,' writes a man who billets officers, 'to eat all their rations. The scale is so absurdly beyond their requirements. Anyone who has to do with feeding the Army must confirm this.'¹

While the Services are allowed to indulge in so much waste, they deprive the civilian population of even that welcome margin of unrationed food on which it depends so much and which has become essential for countless war-workers, unable to have proper meals. 'Members of the fighting Services with *unlimited supplies* of confectionery available in their canteens,' stated the President of the Manufacturing Confectionery Alliance, 'do not hesitate to buy from the shopkeeper. The demands of the Services are often in excess of their needs, and in some canteens stocks remain on shelves for weeks. Retailers dispose of their month's ration in

¹ *Ibid.*

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two or three days, and are thus out of stock for the rest of the month. Firm handling could remedy this injustice.¹

Extravagance and waste have always been among our national failings. It is, to say the least, undesirable that at a time when the people at large are learning to overcome these weaknesses the Services should let them run riot.²

3

We all know of the extravagance on the financial and administrative sides in the Services, of cars and lorries that are allowed to be run in a manner that shortens their life by at least half; of petrol wasted at every possible opportunity. What we are here concerned with is the spirit behind all this wastage and its inevitable reaction in the days to come.

In organizations which, within a very short time, have expanded to gigantic proportions we cannot expect to find the punctiliousness of professional business enterprises. Few of the new men in the Services have ever had the experience of dealing with large sums of money or with equipment on a vast scale. And since the moneyspent is Government money, no-one feels personally responsible for it. Notwithstanding the appeals of higher authorities to economize, the average member

¹ Letter in *The Times*, 19th December 1940.

² The greater all-round stringency since the spring of 1941 has reduced many of the former excesses, but it has not much affected the spirit behind them.

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of the Services is taught by actual experience that money is no object. He only needs to sign a form and make a 'demand', and sooner or later the desired article will appear. The obstacles placed by the Treasury are something very remote for him, and he treats them as a bad joke. What he does know, is that millions are spent every day on the Services, and his motto is, 'Another few quid, and no-one will be poorer for it.'

It cannot be the business of the Treasury to alter such an attitude. Only the local man in command can do it. But it is perhaps debatable whether he himself is quite unaffected by the prevalent attitude, and whether he is, thus, really in a condition to bring about the required change of spirit.

4

Is it necessary that in the Services the inferior mind should so often be placed above the superior? In war-time it is of course unavoidable that the 'vetting' and assessing of the qualifications of each individual cannot be done as thoroughly as in peace-time. But it should not be impossible to prevent the man with the 'best connections' and the most vigorous push from gaining such frequent control over those less privileged with such assets. The resultant waste of brains is only one of the various damaging effects.

More serious is the disillusionment, often even the bitterness, that arises in consequence. Those who are

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employed in actual operations are less frequently thus affected. The man 'on the spot' will soon show his true worth. But the administrative side of the Services is almost as big as the fighting one. It is here that the inferior mind usually finds its niche, and is given power over those possibly far better qualified to command.

In view of our experience in the last war, we might have been forewarned against putting square pegs into round holes. This will, however, probably continue so long as men with imagination are treated by the Services with suspicion, and until we are unwilling to drop the national habit of evading unpleasant situations. The man in a responsible position may often realize that a certain officer is not particularly suitable for the job into which he has been put. But to remove him from it would mean several unpleasant conversations, much correspondence and bother. Unless he is a man of courage and independence of mind, no commanding officer cares to embark on such a course.

Many of us must have come across men who joined up with keen enthusiasm, all out to play their part, and who a few months later were disheartened. 'What is the good of my trying to do my best,' they say, 'no-one will use me for what I am really fitted for, and if I dare to express criticism of a subject I know something about, I am told not to poke my nose into what is not my department.' To become a success you have to be a 'yes-man'.

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To-day the whole nation is making the effort to give of her best. In the Services in particular there should be no room for any other spirit. When it comes to decisive action, even the grumbler will forget his personal grievance and do his best. But the moments of supreme action are few. Moreover, not a very high percentage of Service jobs lend themselves to outstanding effort. The Service life of thousands of men centres in daily routine and possibly an office chair.

The Services in war time may be nothing but an enormous machine in which the individual is merely a cog. Nevertheless, he is a human cog, with human reactions and a human memory. After the war, he will return to communal life either inspired by enthusiasm for his country or with his patriotism considerably damped. It is not always easy to kindle the citizen's patriotism in war time, but it is more difficult and almost more important to keep it alight after the war.

5

Few of our national weaknesses are more objectionable than snobbery. In the Services we find it in a concentrated form and under the name of rank distinction.

The Services cling to the notion that discipline is impossible without a rigid dividing line. The Canadians, who are among our best airmen, and the Australians and New Zealanders, who, as fighters, are second to none, might have taught us by now that you

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can be a first-rate soldier and yet remain impervious to the fetish of rank. They do not regard their officers as being cast from different clay, nor do their officers regard the men as too far removed from them for a friendly talk, companionship, and even friendship.

Our own conventional idea of the pukkha sahib may be valuable in peace time and in a professional army. In a war of the people—and not of mercenary armies under feudal lords—a war fought for the survival of democratic principles, there should be little place for such ideals. It is one thing to demand obedience and discipline during working hours, and another to live in 'off' hours as if the officer were separated from the ranker by some fundamental human difference.

Even among the officers themselves distinction of rank plays its dangerous part. Otherwise there would be a real sense of fellowship in all the messes; these would not so often be split up into cliques; and their atmosphere would be less artificial and less frequently charged with tension.

Many of these conditions may be due to the human element, and they vary from mess to mess. But the unavoidable frailties of that element could be eradicated if the system were modified. To do this, the man in command and the senior officers would have to be made to realize for themselves that we are fighting this war not to strengthen or to prolong the life of our social snobberies and individual privileges, but to

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create conditions in which the word 'democracy' can assume its full meaning. Such conditions cannot be forcibly conjured up if there is no genuine fellowship and no appreciation of a man according to his personal worth, rather than to the number of stripes or pips that adorn his tunic.

Not alone in the Services is class distinction rampant. But because in the Services, disguised as 'rank', it is not regarded as a weakness but as legitimate, and because to-day the influence of the Services affects the whole nation, we cannot dismiss their attitude as unrelated to the greater problems that will confront us after the war. Those who in war time are in the Services will be the men to build the future Britain. It cannot be immaterial to the country in what spirit they discard their uniform to tackle national reconstruction.

Chapter 15

NATIONAL ISSUES



I

In considering the great national problems, as opposed to the individual ones, which after the war will call for new solutions, we must obviously focus our attention, however briefly, on economics, politics, science, religion, and our attitude to the subjects of culture and the land.

Economics, as the basis of material existence, will, naturally, occupy the central position in all future planning.

Whether the system to be chosen after the war will be one of nationalization or merely one of a partial control by the State; whether we adopt as a model the existing public utility companies or evolve something entirely new, is of secondary importance. The soundness of the system will ultimately depend upon the attitude towards economics adopted by the people for whom the system is created. The important thing,

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therefore, is primarily to establish in them a new attitude that will in some measure express the principles of a Christian ethic.

No government alone can perform such a miracle. For our attitude to possessions and the extent of our self-interest depend on our entire spiritual outlook rather than on our views on economics. It will need the concerted effort of all those who influence our spiritual life to bring about the required change: literature, the Press, the cinema, the Churches, educators, reformers, and all men of goodwill.

Purely economic considerations will never weaken an instinct as deeply inbred in modern man as that of self-interest. So long as man regards the satisfaction of his economic self-interest as the most desirable pursuit in life, nothing will change him. Before the war even those who proclaimed that man cannot live on bread alone, usually concentrated all their efforts on securing bread, and what goes with it.

It will be for the State hereafter to provide conditions in which everyone, the gifted and the backward, the young and the old, can find the necessary bread or the work to procure it with. But this in itself will not bring about an economic life that expresses those principles to which we aspire.

To change the attitude to self-interest we shall have to appeal alike to the citizens' reason and his spiritual beliefs. The appeal to reason should be the less difficult

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of the two. By now, economic interdependence, both within the community and in the world in general, must be evident to all. Let us limit ourselves to the object lesson provided by Germany. Had we after the last war given Germany immediate economic assistance and offered her access to all raw materials—in practice and not merely in theory—while, of course, maintaining a rigorous political control to prevent the misuse of those materials, we might have weakened the cataclysm of lunacy into which she was driven, in the first place economically, and, later on, by her own will.

But reason alone is not the most effective weapon in man's mental armoury. In reality it is his ethical code and, finally, his religious convictions that provide him with such a weapon. If a man believes in the soundness and the reality of things spiritual, he will accept less grudgingly some of the views on possessions forced upon him by the war. For a view formed by a free recognition of facts is more effective than one merely imposed by circumstances.

It is untrue that the average man's attitude to economics is determined by greed. What he wants is economic security. Greed rarely enters before security is found. The majority struggle all their lives for the margin of safety.

The doctrine of economic security is taken so much for granted that it rarely occurs to us to question its validity. Yet the events of the last twenty-five years

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alone have proved one thing at least: that there is no such thing as material security. Wars, revolutions, unemployment, economic depression, monetary inflation, have swept aside the social privileges of centuries, possessions held by generations of the same family, the savings of a lifetime.

The security afforded by a political, intellectual, even scientific allegiance, is only a little less unstable than that afforded by an economic one. Changed conditions or new discoveries easily shift the ground beneath it. But for thousands of years and irrespective of intellectual progress and scientific discovery, man has been able to rely on the security provided by his faith and by his reliance upon higher help. Since the days of earliest China and Egypt down to our own times, most of the great men have placed their trust in spiritual security.

Faith in itself offers man a sense of security, the stability of which cannot be equalled by anything else. No wars, revolutions, personal or financial disasters have the power to annihilate it. Moreover in spiritual security is inherent also a strong element of material security. The man relying from personal experience upon his faith knows full well that he will never starve, and that the same God who provides even for 'the fowls of the air' will grant him conditions that in some measure correspond to his *true* potentialities and qualifications. He will know that in his faith he holds the only safe key to his economic security and that in the end it pays more

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to lay up 'treasure in heaven' than 'treasure upon earth'. But he can lay it up in heaven only if his faith is as firm as a rock and not merely a half-faith, and if it does not change with circumstances.

Knowing that his faith is the most important and the only indestructible thing he possesses, and also that God cannot possibly fail to assist him, he will find it less difficult to take a detached view of economic security.

Trust in higher aid by no means implies fatalism or indifference to the dictates of normal life. The man with strong religious beliefs knows that the control over events only to some extent rests in his own hands and, beyond that, in those of God. Within the field of his own abilities and duties, it is he who must set the wheels running.

Faith does not exclude a sense of discrimination, just as divine help does not contradict free will. The two are complementary forces. Exclusive reliance upon the one or the other makes of a man either an ineffectual religious maniac or an inhuman materialist. God helps those who help themselves.

Since there are many people who do not know how to mobilize and make use of religious forces in dealing with material problems, it is for the State to provide the minimum of economic 'security' without which few men can cultivate their inner life. At the same time in a Christian State the leaders should enlighten people as to

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the inevitable frailty of such security and as to the value of the spiritual one.

This means that in the future we cannot exclude from our economic system spiritual tenets which, after all, *are* a reality in our national existence. In consequence, our economic future cannot possibly be viewed in terms of the past.

We must, to begin with, make it quite clear to ourselves that, whatever we may be aiming at in post-war Britain, it can never be a return to the nice, comfortable pre-war days. Many of the amenities of the past depended entirely on things material. Even if we wish to do so, we shall not be able in the future to create equally easy conditions. The past is irrevocably lost—far more so than it was after the last war. The better world that is our goal cannot be brought into being except at a tremendous sacrifice.

But the sacrifice is mainly on the material plane. On the spiritual one, the fulfilment of our aim can bring about nothing but enrichment.

Those who were most dependent upon the advantages of the past will find the change far less painful if they are taught how to develop a more positive attitude towards things spiritual, and a more discriminating one towards the material world; and if they attempt to conquer economic fear. But this can come about only through a recognition of spiritual security.

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2

Internationally speaking, no country can achieve even a minimum of economic freedom unless conditions in the world safeguard an interchange of goods guided by justice rather than by a spirit of selfishness and competition and a fair distribution of all raw materials. No one nation is the owner of the goods that Nature holds at the disposal of all. 'The profit of the earth is for all, the King himself is served by the field.'¹

The more privileged nations are merely the trustees. The Elgin Marbles do not belong to the British Museum and this or that Rembrandt to the National Gallery, but to the nation. The museums are merely the trustees of the nation. Likewise are the raw materials, produced by this or that colony, goods to which free access should be had by all. Of course whoever wants them must pay for them, just as the citizen has to buy a ticket or pay in the form of taxes if he wishes to enjoy what is held in trust for him by the national galleries.

A country that is poor, undeveloped, or suffering from other disadvantages has no means with which to buy certain essential commodities. Yet even its bare economic minimum may be unattainable without them.

Economic freedom in the world means: each country

¹ Ecclesiastes. .

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according to its needs. This can be brought about only if there exist supernational economic bodies to ascertain each country's genuine needs of a particular commodity. It would be for such bodies to discover how much a country is in a position to pay for certain goods or to exchange them in barter for others, or what other country would be able to provide the necessary credits for its less affluent neighbour. Only an impartial, supernational organization of experts can ensure a just economic life through a fair distribution of raw materials and the organizing of a corresponding export of manufactured goods. Naturally a supernational, economic 'parliament' cannot be concerned with the enrichment of this or that country, but with the opening up of resources to all. Its chief aim must be to regulate, and also to increase, the movement within the economic life of the world.

Before we can bring about international economic freedom based on factual (and not political) control and impartiality, and a better economic order at home, we must attempt to change the underlying spirit. You cannot superimpose the right system upon a spirit that is distorted by extreme egotism and materialism. As the leading nation in this war and the trustees of the greatest Empire, it is for us to effect the required change of spirit, firstly at home, and then, by our example, in the rest of the world.

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3

Within the last hundred years no single branch of human activity has brought about greater changes than science. No other changes were alleged to be of greater benefit to humanity. It has practically become part of our creed to regard everything that science does as sacrosanct. Any layman will feel competent to criticize literature and the arts, to hold forth on politics, even to scoff at religion; but he would never dream of expressing criticism of those lofty, disinterested men who live for the sacred cause of science. God in His very heaven is far less free from abuse than is science.

The very word 'scientist' seems to have hypnotized us. Its sound immediately evokes a picture of selfless devotion to truth: as if the scientist alone were concerned with truth, as if only he worked selflessly. As if the social worker bent on improving the conditions of the poor, the serious writer sacrificing years of study and work to find a new and better interpretation of truth, in fact, any serious intellectual or social worker devoted to his job, were not inspired by ideals equally selfless.

Individual scientists may be men beyond reproach. This, however, does not absolve science as a whole from bearing the responsibility for some of the most deplorable conditions in the modern world.

Was it inevitable that science should shut out from

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life most of the values that make it 'human' and worth living? Even if we admit that it should have concentrated exclusively on the material world, was there any need for the neglect of co-ordination with morality? In the end science became more and more divorced from the moral life of man, almost as though it existed on a planet of its own.

It is not easy to find excuses for the refusal on the part of science to submit it to standards other than its own. The pretence of innocence and good intentions simply does not hold good. 'We didn't mean to oust millions of men from their jobs by replacing them with this or that wonderful piece of machinery; we didn't intend people to use our aeroplanes for dropping bombs, which, again, we didn't invent for such purposes. We cannot be held responsible if humanity chooses to misuse our achievements, this beneficial gas and that beneficial poison, this beneficial machine and that beneficial electric ray.'

Yet who else produced those gadgets and gases and rays, and who else possessed sufficient knowledge to realize the danger inherent in them? If I kill my neighbour by putting poison into his teacup I shall be convicted for manslaughter even if I excuse myself by saying I didn't mean him to drink it. My intention may have been of the best, but I and I alone put the poison into the cup, and I alone knew that the poison was as potent as my friend was careless. If a writer or a painter

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produces a work of art which, for all its sincerity and artistic value, endangers the moral or political equilibrium of the community, the authorities step in and sue the author in a court of law.

Science in its sense of superiority thought exclusively in its own terms and remained indifferent to the possible results of its discoveries. Year after year it produced inventions that would wipe out peace, humanity, nay, the very sense of life, and then looked down with Olympian indifference at the foolish ways in which humanity chose to misuse its wonderful gifts.

It was obviously the duty of science to submit its discoveries not merely to its own 'scientific' tribunal, but to moral tribunals as well. If you play with fire, you must make sure that your antics, however noble their aim, do not interfere with your neighbour's safety. If science had no means of subjecting its works to the control of a moral tribunal of its own, it should have insisted upon the establishment of such an authority outside its own ranks.

No new inventions should have been allowed to be manufactured, and then let loose upon a defenceless humanity, which had not first been scrutinized and approved by a tribunal composed of representatives of science, the State, and other branches of national life. Certain non-political bodies working within the League of Nations have shown that if there is goodwill super-national and efficient control of such a kind can be

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exercised. Science, however, assured the world that its only goal was the disinterested discovery of truth. At the same time it showed few scruples in selling its achievements to any government or industry willing to exploit the invention.

Naturally science by itself cannot exercise the required control. The work is too complex and of too universal a character. Governments and industry share a great deal of the responsibility. Together they have made the horrors of modern warfare possible.

The problem of moral supervision of scientific work is one of supreme difficulty. But unless science submits itself wholeheartedly to such supervision and concentrates on co-ordinating its efforts with other human activities—the social services, religion, intellectual, and even artistic work—it will remain outside the new spirit from which we hope to see a better future born.

4

In the course of a recent conversation I remarked that the religious spirit of the nation would have to play a decisive part in post-war Britain. Immediately a friend interposed: 'Don't drag the Churches in. You will frighten off all the really good people. Don't you realize that the Churches are completely dead—even if they themselves don't know it yet?'

Only then did it occur to me that when thinking in terms of religion the actual idea of the Churches as such

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rarely crossed my mind. My own previous experiences had made me regard spiritual activity in general, and religions in particular, as something unconnected with the Churches. In the minds of most people, however, both friends and foes of the Churches, the two ideas are still closely interrelated if not actually synonymous.

In recent years many of us must have observed with growing frequency that whenever people of strong spiritual views, devoted, perhaps, to social work, get together, the Churches are seldom mentioned.

The amount of people who are genuinely religious and yet refuse to have anything to do with the established Churches must be very great indeed. Many of these 'deserters' were once loyal members of their particular Church, yet their number has grown considerably since the last war. I doubt whether it has decreased since September 1939.

Never before in our history can there have been a more wonderful opportunity for the Churches to lead the nation spiritually. Who but the Churches should have directed the citizen's thought; told him what, in a spiritual sense, both we and Germany stand for; what Christianity's part is in an issue contested through blood and murder; what our true ideals are; what sort of future it is our duty to prepare for; and how it can be achieved?

The number of people thirsting for this sort of guidance must be legion. There would never have been so

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much impatience about stating our war and peace aims if the Churches had helped to clarify our views. As it was, we scarcely ever expected them to rise to the occasion and looked instead to the Government. Yet as the question of our post-war aims is essentially a spiritual one, it is hardly for the State to provide a comprehensive answer. It is not the politician's job to weigh up problems which only incidentally are connected with politics, and in reality go far beyond these.

It is not the purpose of these pages to offer reasons for the failure of the Churches and for the growth of non-denominational religion in this country. Such power as our Churches may still possess, would seem to lie chiefly in their accumulated reserves as a great and ancient organization, and in national habit. It is less the vitality of their spirit or their example which inspires the people.

Wars invariably bring about an intensification of spiritual life. But although the present war, being fought for everything the Churches stand for, may increase their influence, it is questionable whether this will be more than temporary.

There are many excellent individuals in the Church. But in most cases their excellence seems inherent in their personal qualities, and has not developed because the Church has made of them good Christians. An increase in the number of people whose excellence was indeed the work of the Churches might be achieved if

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our official trustees of Christianity were in themselves conspicuous examples of the gospel they preach. But a Church whose leaders are diplomats or able administrators rather than crusaders or humble saints, a Church which is more concerned with its material privileges than with leading a spiritual revolt, such a Church is not likely to produce such effects nor to play in our future the part which, by virtue of her sublime inheritance, it should be her mission to play.

‘Suppose that during the last century the Churches had devoted to sweetening intellectual corruption or denouncing cheating a quarter of the energy they spent in nosing out fornication. . . . But one was easy and the other was not. . . . To upset legalized cheating the Church must tackle Government in its very stronghold; while to cope with intellectual corruption she will have to affront all those who exploit it—the politician, the Press, and the more influential part of her own congregation. Therefore she will acquiesce in a definition of morality so one-sided that it has deformed the very meaning of the word by restricting it to sexual offences. And yet if every man living were to sleep in his neighbour’s bed it could not bring the world so near shipwreck as that pride, that avarice, and that intellectual sloth which the Church has forgotten to write in the tale of its capital sins.’¹

¹ Miss Dorothy Sayers, in her address opening the Archbishop of York’s Conference at Malvern, 8th January 1941. (Reported by *The Times*, 9th January 1941.)

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The religious instinct of our people is very strong. But what is best in it does not often shine through the avenues built by the Churches. Whether after the war this instinct will feel compelled to mould for itself an entirely new body, no-one can foretell. The new spiritual ardour evoked in so many by this war is already purifying the clay out of which the future mould will be shaped. Yet it would be a thousand pities if in the days to come we had to expend energy in creating a new vessel while an existing one might still serve.

But, to vary the metaphor, the new wine cannot be poured into the old bottles unless the Churches change their spirit, and do so radically and without delay.

The new spirit must be one of saintliness, humility, courage, vision, and indifference to the praise of the powers that be. One tiny village church vibrant with the living faith of the congregation is worth a dozen cathedrals in which the unctuousness of bishops and the drowsiness of their flocks are reflected back by the indifference of the gilded altars.

In a country victorious in its defence of the Christian way of living everyone should learn the gospel and the meaning of Christianity. Whether this will be done along denominational or any other lines is immaterial. But for those who are not opposed to the creed that is inseparable from our entire history and our way of living, it may become necessary to make the teaching of

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Christianity compulsory—as is education and obedience to law. Obviously the necessary teaching should come from the Churches. Past events, however, suggest that we may have to look elsewhere: to the masters and teachers of the past; to certain personalities in the intellectual, social, and political spheres, and, finally, to ourselves.

5

We are not likely to find in the reshaped Britain of to-morrow the old political forms that were valid before 1939. Our party system was representative of our political instinct and evolution in the past. It was sound, but it began to reveal that in peace time it could not work fast enough, and that it produced neither the discipline nor the flexibility a rapidly changing age demanded of it. That age was developing at a far greater speed than was the party system.

The days of rigid party differences, and of treating the problems of the nation from the viewpoint of a party philosophy, seem to be over. The exigencies of the present time point to newer political methods, both nationally and internationally. It may be that professional representation will have to take the place of a purely political one; that the cumbersomeness of the democratic machinery as employed in peace time will have to give place to some of that dynamism and discipline the war has already imposed upon it. What

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before 1939 was done on the extravagant footing of protracted party argument will probably be followed by a purely professional interchange and by collaboration within special commissions.

The final shape of our political system is of less consequence than that the spirit behind it should conform to the advance in our entire national life since September 1939. The political system must recognize the spiritual revolution we are witnessing to-day, and become its willing instrument. The important thing is to preserve the unity of the spirit by which the various branches of the national life are fed. Though the exact shades and colours of the future foliage may be beyond our vision, we can already set about to strengthen that spirit. The inborn political genius of the race will sense which parts of the old system should be retained and which new ones adopted and expanded.

6

A better life, as we envisage it for the future, is irrevocably linked up with Nature and with life on the land. So long as we regard farming merely as a secondary industry and the land as a pleasant background for our holidays and our games, such a life will remain beyond our reach.

The message of the land cannot be assessed in terms of crops and physical well-being only. It touches the very founts of man's life.

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The nature of man is intimately related to Nature around. Everyone should be able to reflect in his own personality in some measure the rhythm that governs life on the land; the rhythm of night and day; the rhythm of the seasons. Urban existence has almost completely destroyed man's awareness of these rhythms and of their meaning, and has thus deprived him of the sense of unity with Nature.

If there still existed such a unity, there would be none of the loneliness that is one of the most marked features of modern psychology. Feeling a stranger in a universe which in reality should offer him all the intimacy of a home, man is afraid of solitude.

Solitude has become for him synonymous with emptiness. So he makes frantic efforts to escape from it, and seeks refuge in the opiates of noise, movement, and forced activity. Every day he invents new toys that will prevent him from being alone with himself and with his thoughts. The language of the seasons, of sky and earth, sunshine and wind, of the trees and the running waters, of the ox and of the furrow of the plough has become alien to him. Yet this is the language of unity and not of separation, of eternity and not of the fleeting moment. Instead he has learned strange new words with which to describe his strange new toys, made to-day and replaced to-morrow. While his new language loses its meaning almost as soon as it is learnt, the very sound of that other language brings

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real knowledge, and to those who understand it, life itself. •

If anything is essential to our Britain of to-morrow, it is the rediscovery of the land, a new incorporation of Nature into the citizen's life.

The war has already provided a shock that moves us in the right direction. Home farming has suddenly become more important than it has ever been in our lifetime. Millions of acres that we had allowed to lie fallow have at last been reclaimed for agriculture. The countryside, formerly a completely closed book to the majority of urban inhabitants, has been opened up to thousands of evacuees.

Gradually we are learning that even an industrial country can carry on its work without extreme centralization in towns. Since 1939 hundreds of residential streets in London have become deserted, thousands of people have left the great city. And yet the life of London has not come to a complete standstill. We have begun to learn that it is possible to reorganize matters in such a way as to continue the life of the cities without herding people together like cattle.

Industrial life itself need not be centralized in a few big places, but can be scattered in order to allow the citizen to live nearer the land. What we need now is to assimilate these new lessons by organizing not the indiscriminating instincts of the herd, but the sounder ones of the individual, and by planning reasonably for

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his happiness. In the past we unquestioningly adopted the easiest solutions, even though in time they were to prove the costliest.

7

Among the more obvious conditions for a better future is greater simplicity. Both in our pleasures and in our entire mode of life we have forgotten to be simple.

Modern man understands enjoyment chiefly in terms of escapism. These are provided by mechanical and electrical things. Without the motor-car, the cinema, the wireless, the cocktail bar, and the dance hall, he can hardly conceive of the possibility of enjoyment. Can we deny that this is a pathological state of affairs?

A new relationship with the land can do much to correct this, and to open up to man some of the most potent sources of life. The return to the land must embrace both work and pleasure. The child must be trained on the land and not only in towns. It must be taught things, both mental and physical, that no classroom or playing fields can teach it. And the adult must discover once again that the highest forms of pleasure are to be found in the workings of his own mind and in all that Nature has to offer.

8

A nation that is truly civilized has the duty of cultivating the things of the mind. The arts, literature, archi-

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ture should be considered at least as important as games. Yet for over a hundred years we have looked upon culture as though it were some effeminate bastard. We could not help accepting it, but we did not take it seriously. Let it stay with the ladies in their drawing-rooms and powder closets, but don't expect us to introduce it in our table talk after dinner, to allow it to intrude into offices and clubs, to treat it as if it were equally important as our business or our game of golf.

The highest aim of a civilization—the Greek and the Roman may serve as examples in this respect—must be to produce a citizen as fully developed in the exercise of his diverse faculties as possible. The world of culture is that which the greatest and subtlest thoughts and the sublimest gifts of geniuses have built up through thousands of years. If he approaches that world in the spirit of the average modern Briton, the 'fully developed' citizen can never come into being.

To-day we feel outraged at the wanton destruction of our City churches and other architectural gems which a nobler past has left in our trust. Before the war any speculator or contractor could buy up and pull down any architectural treasure and replace it by architectural atrocities. The few who were conscious of the meaning of culture protested in vain. In fact they were regarded by most of their fellow citizens as harmless cranks and highbrows.

I doubt whether the Hun has destroyed much more

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than we have done ourselves. Our own wanton destruction may not always have struck at buildings of equal historical fame—we are sentimental and pride ourselves on our sense of history, which makes us shed tears over the decay of a beamed roof under which Elizabeth drank a goblet of wine—but the artistic merits of those objects of our barbarism were often just as great. We didn't put the axe to our City churches, mainly, perhaps, because the legal consent for such a procedure would have involved too much.

Tragic though the loss of so much of the England of Wren, Inigo Jones, Grinling Gibbons, and Nash may be, I must confess I am glad of it. For at last it may have opened our eyes to the value of things that are beautiful in themselves as well as through the patina of noble traditions. And I am glad because the loss should teach us to make every effort to improve our standards of art. If we want our architects to develop the genius to build new towns, more beautiful than those of the last hundred years, we as a nation must take a greater and more intelligent interest in art. If we ourselves don't improve, our architects will not learn to see that the new spirit does not mean building all houses as though they were factories; mistaking utility for beauty; and bareness and lack of imagination for utility.

I am also glad of the Hun's barbaric revenge upon defenceless architecture, because it will force us to accept the idea of town planning. When we had the

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chance to build our new housing estates and roads in accordance with an imaginative and tasteful town planning, we usually preferred to leave the work to chance and to vested interests.

So we must not weep over the Hun's destruction of the monuments of ancient English culture, but learn anew that a great nation must evolve a living culture as great as its civilization.

Chapter 16

THE SUMMING UP



I

The changes in national habits and methods which the better Britain of to-morrow demands of us, complex though they may be, are not beyond our reach. They are symptomatic of a revolution, yet that revolution is not a secret force lurking in an unknown future, but a fact with which we are familiar already. The national genius preferring evolution to revolution, and violence not being inherent in the national character, spectacular outbursts have been few.

It may be well worth remembering that for the last fifty years the economic gulf between rich and poor in this country has been persistently shrinking; and that since the beginning of the present war, with the increase in taxation, the destruction of the property of those privileged to possess it and the increase in the workman's wages, that gulf is narrowing rapidly.

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In the lives of individuals the war has already replaced many of the older conceptions by newer ones, and it is doing something similar in the life of the nation as a whole.

State and private enterprise are moving more and more in an identical direction and along kindred lines. In countless organizations the native genius for compromising between compulsory and voluntary effort has taken a big step forward. The same is true of the inherent national gift for compromise between individualism and collectivism. The war has unavoidably added power to both the State and the great public corporations. At the same time it has found a much fuller use for the helpfulness of the one-man business, and has encouraged cartels. Likewise in education, which, at one time was the exclusive domain of the wealthy, both local authorities and the State are increasingly opening every door to the less privileged.

Whatever the shape of post-war Britain, its foundation stones have been laid already. We need not grope in the dark for something entirely new. The Russians and the Germans felt compelled to destroy most of what was theirs, and to begin from scratch. We merely need to fortify what is best in our way of living, eradicate what we recognize as harmful, and clarify our vision of those powers which are always willing to aid us in any truly constructive effort.

THE SUMMING UP

2

Summing up, we find that there are six principles to which we shall have to adhere.

1. The first one is deliberately to base all our efforts on that faith which has always been the main inspiration of our progress.

2. The second is to summon up the courage fearlessly to follow the line indicated by faith, and not to shrink from any reforms, however radical and painful they may be.

3. The third demands an incorporation of morality into all spheres of activity, from politics and economics to science.

4. The fourth is co-ordination of all efforts. No longer must each sphere obey its own laws alone, be indifferent to other spheres, and serve aims which may easily be opposed to theirs.

5. The fifth implies vision—perceiving the true demands of the times and recognizing facts instead of hiding them behind the mists of wishful dreams.

6. And, finally, the sixth means an expansion of the whole soul—a discarding of mental insularity and prejudice; greater broadmindedness towards subjects that hypocrisy or mischievous traditions have caused us to see distortedly. This will primarily affect our attitude to culture, to sex, to legal reform, to class distinction and social snobbery.

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3

Is there any indication that our country will be able to make the necessary effort?

Before 1939 there were many people, both here and abroad, who doubted whether we possessed the required moral stamina and the idealism to wage a war against Germany. Events have proved how shortsighted they were. Without undue conceit we are entitled to say that a nation which has stood up to the horrors of the Blitzkrieg as this one has done; which has met every new discomfort with a quiet and stubborn cheerfulness; which has found the genius to face and cope with every newsituation; which overnight has found the strength to put aside some of its most treasured shibboleths; which from the laziest has become one of the most hard working; and, finally, has been able to find the material means with which to wage the most costly war in history—that such a nation should be able to tackle any task, no matter what the cost in spiritual, mental or material resources.

We may be permitted to agree with a foreign observer, who knowing this country as thoroughly as only foreigners seem able to do, once said, 'Never since the heroic days of Greece has the world had such a just, sweet, boyish master. It will be a black day for the human race when scientific blackguards, conspirators, churls, and fanatics manage to supplant him.'¹

¹ Professor George Santayana, *Soliloquies in England*, (1922).

THE SUMMING UP

This time it is not merely the spirit of the age that cries out for a better future. The nation, too, is eager that it should come.

In the last war the majority of people wanted nothing so much as a return to the pre-1914 days. Only a tiny minority craved for something better and more just. To-day the opposite is the case. People *know* that there would be no meaning in the struggle and in their own sufferings if the result were no more than a continuation of what has gone before. Hence the intense desire for a declaration of our peace aims. People seem to realize that if a new world is indeed to be built, the task will be of such magnitude that even while the battle is still raging we must already accustom ourselves to new ways of thinking.

4

Critics of the Christian solution are prone to say that if such a solution were feasible it would have come about long ago. And in any case, they add, man will always remain a greedy, sensuous beast of predatory instincts, and nothing will change him. Finally they point to the present state of the world and to the apparent failure of Christianity in the past.

There is no need to go back to the subject of Christian achievement in the past nor to emphasize our failure to live up to the Christian ideal. Even the critics of Christianity must admit that nothing is more respon-

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sible for this bloody culmination of our past failures than are the anti-Christian forces exemplified by modern Germany. However half-heartedly we may have followed our religious commandments, however complacent and foolish we may have been, the responsibility for this culmination does not rest primarily on our shoulders. Even in our half-hearted and muddling way we should have continued to progress and to strive after nobler ideals, if it had not been for the madness of an anti-Christian Germany.

Of course, however great our effort, we shall not create Paradise. Evolution is not an instantaneous overcoming of all evil. So long as the human race exists, there will always be a conflict of the two opposing principles, good and evil. What matters is that an effort should be made, sufficiently great to leave its mark upon generations to come.

It is one of the mysterious laws of human life that to achieve the second-best, we must aim at the very best. Even the best Christian never attains his ideal completely. But having persistently striven towards it, he has advanced along the road he has mapped out for himself. As a nation we can do no more. And the spiritual powers do not judge us and respond according to our achievement, but to our effort. We may fail over and over again and despair over our incompetence, but each genuine effort brings us nearer to fulfilment.

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By aiming deliberately at ideals which even in the past we have recognized as right, we cannot fail to produce something better than what we have left behind. From the Prime Minister downwards, most of the best men in this country have asserted, and I believe with complete sincerity, that we are fighting this war for the preservation of a Christian civilization and that we intend building up a future far more in accordance with the Christian commands. Instead of putting bars of cynicism, atheism, and one-sided rationalism between the spokes of such an effort, let us do our best to make its objectives real.

The critic of the religious way is usually a cynic suspicious of any deed born of faith and idealism. Yet I doubt whether the world of the future will be built up by anyone but idealists. Not by men who revel in destructive criticism, but by those who do the actual work themselves; who care little whether the world knows their names or not and who continue to translate their gospel into action because their faith is stronger than themselves. It is men of this kind from whom we have inherited what is noblest in our past. Thus it is the duty of those of us who *know* that they are right to render their labours less arduous.

Once the present war is over, our chief responsibility will not be towards this or that country, minority

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or class. The national and political issues are only incidental. It will be towards that future whose distant light helps us to bear the sight of the blood and ruins round about us now.

Never before have we been confronted with an issue that was so universal, that went so radically to the roots of our very being. So no longer can we rely on half-measures, but must summon up the required courage and find the required strength. If we don't, God help us.

All we need is acknowledgement of reality—both visible and invisible. But it will be difficult to translate such acknowledgement into action if there is no deep faith behind it. Faith and truth must indeed be the foundations on which to build our future dwelling place. We must sink them deep enough, both into our national and our individual souls. Then, and only then, will the spirit which in the past has helped us to establish what was best in our civilization, do so in times to come.

THE END

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